Mrs Guss Johnson.

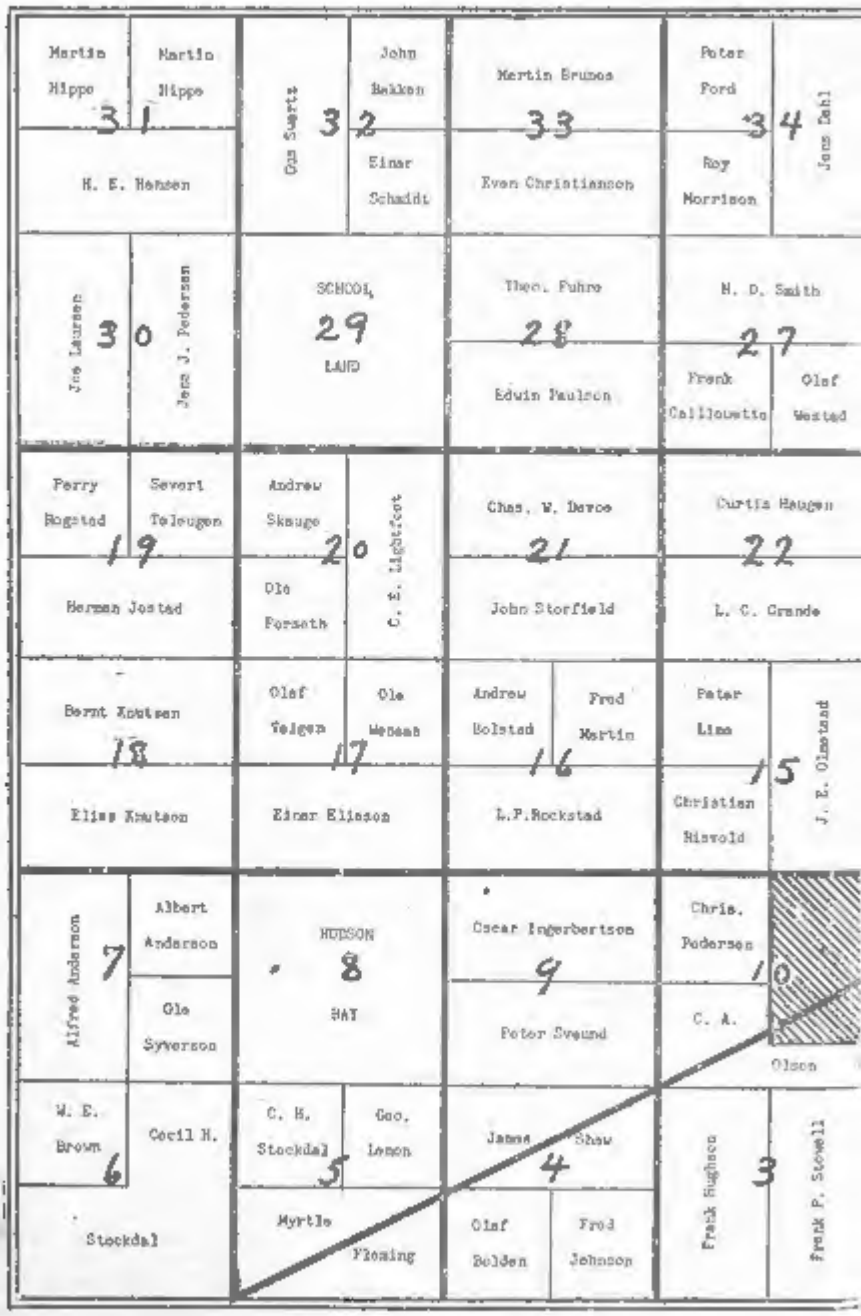
1905  1955

Robsart Pioneers

Review the Years

This History is
respectfully dedicated
to all Pioneers

Township 5, Range 25, West 3rd Meridian



c.1955

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Robsart SK. Pioneers

Review the Years

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Prairie Provinces
Collection

Foreword

THIS book is sponsored by the organizations of Robsart, who are represented by the following committee: Mrs. J. E. Olmsted, Mrs. George Wenaas, Mrs. J. Smiley, Mrs. Walter Tillier, Mrs. Albert Anderson, Mr. Ralph Morrison, Mrs. R. A. DeCrane. It is compiled and typed by Mrs. R. C. Morrison and Miss Lulu Knutsen.

In order to make a historical record of the first settlement of the country immediately surrounding the village of Robsart, in South-western Saskatchewan, we have endeavored to put together in book form the information gathered from quite a number of the first settlers themselves or their descendants. Some have given their own personal story, setting forth their own experiences in getting settled in this country, as well as the years spent here since that time, thus making a comparison of the methods and habits of that early period of some forty-five years ago with their present standing and the progress along the way. We shall leave these as they have been handed in and give them a place in the record just as they are. Others have given only partial information, while still others gave only statements of events and names of persons who have at one time lived here and have moved away and of those who have remained in the district during these years, all of whom will no doubt be interested in reading this history. We trust this record will also be of interest to many others and will cause many to have a clearer conception of the hardships as well as the joys of those who braved the unknown and started out against all odds to hew out a home for themselves and their families in a land where opportunity had so strongly beckoned.

The people who came to settle around the section where the village of Robsart is now located, came from many different parts of the world. Most of them had lived, at least a portion of their lives, in the United States of America. I might also say that the majority of those from the States, or their forefathers, had originally emigrated from the Scandinavian Countries.

Enough about the people! Now let me describe as nearly as possible this place the settlers hoped soon to call home.

The district where the village of Robsart now stands is fairly level prairie, with a slight drainage system to the south-west. The spring thaws drain in that direction and eventually join the Battle Creek to the west. The soil is light chocolate loam or alluvial clay loam. To the north and east some miles distant are rolling hills. Much of this rolling country is now being farmed, especially to the east. To the south about eighteen or twenty miles is a long, level-topped hill known as "The Old Man On His Back." This hill divides the prairie lands on its north side from those on the south. To the west the prairie stretches many

miles before the hills are met. About eighteen or twenty miles north and north-west are the Cypress Hills; one point, "Bald Butte" being the highest point in Saskatchewan. These Cypress Hills are partly covered with spruce and pine timber, and the now well known Cypress Hills Park is a beauty spot second to none in Saskatchewan. The Whitemud, or "Frenchman" River, runs east from Cypress Lake about half way between Robsart and Cypress Park. In the early days of the settlement this river had to be crossed and at that time there were no bridges. The settlers coming into the country via Maple Creek (as most of them did) had to cross the Cypress Hills just about two miles east of the present entrance of the Park. Maple Creek is about forty-five miles north of Robsart and in those early days it took two or three days with horse teams, and longer with oxen, to make the trip. Those trips were especially hard in winter when the snow was deep and blizzards common. The land where Robsart is now situated was considered the prospective bread basket of Canada, according to the understanding of the land seekers, but those first few years found their baskets with very little of the staple food.

Axel Rosdahl busting sod the hard way, 1911

Reno Branch, No. 162

List of Personnel, 1914-18

ADAMS, Murray
ASHTONE,
BRACKENBURY Charles
BADGER, John
BARROBY, Frank
BRUNAS, Lauritz
BURROWS, Russell
BENTON, Allen
BISSETT, Joseph
COCHRANE, Clarence
CASWELL, Steve
*CATON, William
COLLINGSTONE, Ernest
*CHAMBERLIN, Frank
CHAMBERLIN, Joe
CHAULEUR, John
DENNIS, Jack H.
ELDER, Andrew, sr.
FENNEL, John
FLETCHER Joseph
GORDON, R. N. S.
GALE, W. S.
GOVENLOCK, Tom
HALL, Clifford
HARRADINE, Percy
HAWKER, Albert
HOGG, Charlie
HOLLAND, Percy
JOHNSON, John
*LUPTON, William
LESTER, Jack
LEWIS, Tommy
MOIR, Thomas
MUER, Jack
MIDDLETON, Jim
McRAE Hec.
*McCOLL, John
NARROW, Jack
NARROW, Richard
NICHOLAS, Arthur
OLSON, Harry
OLSON, Ole
PETERSEN, Howard
PHILLIPS, Aubrey
*PIGGOTT, Alex
PHILLIPS, Harold
PRATT, A. N.
ROBERTSON, Keith
ROBB, James
ROBB, Thomas
*RUSSELL, Stanley
SNOOK, Ted
SCARLETT Fred
SCOTT, R.
SMITH, Lee
SHEPHERD, Harry
SIMMONS, Bert
SIMMONS, Ernie
SAWDEN, Charlie
SANDERSON, Jack
*SWIHART, Art.
SWARTZS, Gus
TURNER, Albert
THORMESOSET, Iener
*TIBETTS Jack
WEST, Wilber
WICK, John
WILEY, Monty
WOODS, Joe
WELSH, Eric
WESTON, Reg.
WHITE, Edward Clifford
YOUNG, William
YOUNG, George
YOUNG, Jim

* Killed in Action

General Information

THE first thing the settlers did after arriving in the "south country," was to locate their land by finding the corner stakes.. The next thing, they erected some kind of a shelter—usually a sod shack. There was slough water to be had, but this had to be hauled in barrels, strained and boiled to free it of "wigglers" and make it safe to drink or cook with. This had to be done until wells could be dug. All this took time, but wells were dug as soon as possible as no one liked the slough water too well. As lemons did not grow in this northern prairie and were too expensive to buy, the best way to deal with the water was to make it into coffee. The wells, when finally dug, were often deep and the water good, which was much appreciated.

In the early summer of 1910, practically all of the new settlers were just moving in and everyone was busy trying to get established. Lightning set several fires that spring and summer in the luxuriant dry grass and everyone had to make a good fire guard around their headquarters and then fight fires to try and save the grass land for hay and grazing. After the summer of 1910, the settlers had to go about six miles east to cut hay on account of the grass having been burned off the previous year. For some reason there seemed to be more lightning that year than at any time since and this was the cause of the numerous fires.

The first year (1910) there were no schools and the children were free and found everything new and interesting. They spent the time catching gophers; trying to keep away from range cattle; and as most of them went barefooted they had to watch their step to miss cactus, sharp stones, etc. Their feet soon got toughened up until the soles were almost like shoe leather.

Buffalo had once ranged free on these prairies, but all that was left of them were their bleached bones so plainly seen after the 1910 fires swept over the land. Piles of these bones were sometimes seen where the former residents—the American Indians—had camped years before. Rings of stones still lay on the ground in many places showing where their teepees had been pitched. These rings of stones showed that there were often small villages of these teepees. Even after the white settler came wagon loads of Indians would sometimes come around gathering up the buffalo horns, which they trimmed and polished and mounted for hat racks and then would sell to the white people.

During those first years, as many of the men who could do so went away to the more improved districts for farm threshing in the fall, and then perhaps to the woods in British Columbia in the winter, trying to make enough money to tide them over another year while improving their lands and building their homes. It was quite an undertaking starting out on an unimproved piece of land without much equipment, and trying to buy an outfit to work with during the summer on the $40.00 per month wages earned during the winter, and at the same time keep food on the table and clothes on the back. The costs of machinery was high and to buy on time meant ten or twelve per cent interest. It was a real struggle, especially for those with a family.

Charles Djuberg hitting the long trail to Maple Creek, 1910

The horse teams would sometimes stray away and leave their owners on foot to walk the country over looking for them. The oxen were also guilty of this trick at times. The oxen often refused to work during the heat of the day and would just lie down in the harness when they felt they had done enough. When the heel flies got bad they would stampede to a slough and go out in the water dragging the machinery with them. One settler, P. L. Peterson, had three oxen and one time they strayed away. He walked until he could hardly go any further and while climbing a hill where he hoped to be able to see quite a distance, he must have been taking on more steam every step for when he reached the top of the hill he had to let off steam and in his own words, "I just stood up there and jelled, and jelled, and jelled" (yelled).

When the owners were through working the oxen, they were often turned into durable beef. This Mr. Peterson just mentioned was one of the first settlers to move in in 1910. He came with his family and household effects to Maple Creek from Ontario where he had worked in an iron foundry, and upon reaching Maple Creek purchased three oxen, one of which was a large black ox named Diamond. This ox became famous locally. In the fall of 1912, Mr. Peterson decided to take his family to Medicine Hat for the winter to find work for himself and at the same time send his children to school. He sold two of his oxen to another settler, but old Diamond had outlived his days of usefulness as a work ox, and as he had put on weight on the dry prairie wool, Mr. Peterson decided to turn him into beef. Now, one large ox made too much beef for one family, so he proceeded to sell the surplus throughout the community. No one could buy much, but most every one bought some. That was one time when the whole community agreed that some beef was tough. For several years afterwards when a housewife got some beef that she could hardly boil tender she was sure it must be a piece of old Diamond. In just about every farm the threshing machine visited that fall the men had a chance to try out the strength of their molars on pieces of old Diamond.

There were a few ranches in the country when the settlers first arrived, and their herds of cattle and horses roamed the country during the summer time. These cattle not being handled much by men and being almost wild by nature, and not used to seeing so many people around, caused the settlers no little worry and concern as their children had to walk some distance to their schools and were liable to meet a herd of these cattle on the way. However, we found the cattle were really more curious than dangerous and we soon learned how to frighten them away.

Luce School was the first to organize, about three miles west of Robsart village, with Miss Myrtle Morrison as teacher, 1911-1912. It was in 1914 that Olive School District was organized. The first meeting was held at A. E. Morrison's home with Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Morrison, P. L. Peterson, and Martin Lungrin among those present. The first School Board comprised P. L. Peterson, Mike Distid and M. Melesca.. The names of all the girls in the district were written down and from them the name "Olive" was chosen as the name of the School, The young lady chosen was Olive Robertson. A. E. Morrison was secretary-treasurer.

Olive School House was built by "Uncle" John Asplund. School opened on August 2nd, with Miss Willa Olmsted as teacher. The eleven pupils had to stand up when checked in that morning, as their desks and seats didn't arrive until noon.

The first school held in Robsart Village was in Abbott's Block, with Miss Grace Thurlow as teacher. The school house was built in 1916.

[illegible]

to keep the children warm enroute.

[illegible]

bars were closed.

[illegible]

matron was Miss Meadows.

Robsart when three months old.

Buildings left to right Barr Lumber Yard, Rueben's Store Union Bank (without windows) Kelly's Drug Store, north half of Mrs France's Restaurant Meleny & Heninger's Hardware Store Charlie Chu's Restaurant Lee & Young's Massey Harris Agency Bill Hazard's Pool Hall, Hotel, with scaffolding around it, Revelstoke Lumber Yard

The rural telephone Line was organized by T F McGregor and Lolit in 1918, with Mrs Elmer Blair as central operator Later the four circuits were joined together with a central.

The first elevator to go up was the North Star, agent, Mr Styles.

THE FIRST—

—Station Agent—Mr Sarka.
Postmaster in Robsart—Mr Rogstad
Jeweller Charles Djuberg.
—Harness Shop—Pete Olsen.
—Business on south side of the track P R. Abbott's Feed Mill, Store and Butcher Shop.
—Blacksmith Shop—Andy Holmes.
—Two Hardware Stores—Melena and Heninger, Anderson and Moval
Photograph Gallery John Aaplund.
Barber Shop and Pool Room Bill Hazard.
—Restaurant Mrs. France.
—Drug Store—Joe Kelly
—Machine Agents W A Olmsted—John Deere,
Mr Rogstad International Harvester,
Lee and Young—Massey-Harris.
—Butcher Shop—Ted Davies and Rogstad.
—Garage—Mr Bricker
—Livery Barn—France and Plant
Real Estate—Mr Gilkeson.
Laundry—Fred Lee.

—Bank Manager—Stanley Elliott.
[illegible]
Physician—Dr Hardiman, 1914
[illegible]

[illegible] years on the homestead

[illegible]

[illegible] running a store in Ontario

[illegible] to the departed.

[illegible] the whole district [illegible] with [illegible] cutting the [illegible] crop and the [illegible] of the trucks as they carry the grain to the elevators or granaries.

In Retrospect

As I stand alone by the old wagon wheel,
The changing ways of life I feel.
Wagons decaying and covered with weeds,
That once did carry me where life's hopes lead,
All a dream, days long gone now,
When I walked by the wheel or followed the plow

With the bay and the roan I have reaped and sown,
But now I am old with a dream and alone.
Those days of yore come back so real,
As the joys of the reins in my hand I feel,
I looked ahead in those days, so glad,
Now I look back with thoughts that are sad.
The faithful old wagon has been left behind,
The bay and the roan here only in mind.

But times have changed for the better they say,
The tractor and car have come to stay,
Its wheels have turned over many a trail,
For the bay and the roan would never fail.

At night we'd come where there's water and grass--
Of the future we'd dream (I and my lass)
But now as I stand by the wagon alone,
In dreams once more with the bay and the roan,
The youth and strength of their steps I feel,
With hearts of lions and true as steel.

I look at my wife so young and sweet,
As I sit by her side on the old wagon seat
The reins through my fingers once more I let slide,
As over the plains of dreams I ride

- Selected

House by the Side of the Road

(Mrs. Bob Young)

I LIVED beside the road and tried to be a friend to man and beast. The horses that hauled those loads of lumber, household goods, and families to their new homes should never be forgotten.

In 1909, the first of the settlers came to look over ground for homesteads. In 1910, wagons travelled the trail, sometimes by day and night. 1911, and we were really busy. Dave Johnston, Neil Johnson, Mr. Von Hagen, George McMurchy, hauled goods for the stores at Kelvinhurst, which was the post office then. The Rogstad family, Eliasons, Morrisons, Knudtsons and Pingheims came often. Who was braver than Mrs. Henry Abbott taking home her baby boy less than three weeks old, when the snow lay deep all the way from Maple Creek to Robsart? She wrapped the baby and put it inside her own coat to keep it warm on that long ride home. That night Mr. and Mrs. Olson were lost in a heavy fog for hours. Those were the pioneers of the south country.

The day and evening of the blizzard, fifteen men got as far as Bert Young's house. He had half a loaf of bread. The meat was frozen. Supper consisted of several pans of baking powder biscuits. The men played cards, this was before the Rummy game in style. I think Martin Martinson, of Vidora, was in the game.

A few times a wagon stood in our yard with a silent sleeper in it on the way to Maple Creek for burial. At times a rider made a quick trip for the doctor. The doctor arrived by team—on occasions too late. I tried to give a decent meal to them, a clean bed, and I did what I could to help. I gave supper to Jack Madden at midnight once. He had trouble along the way.

Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Bugg came late one evening. She was so discouraged, her chickens and meat had been stolen after being unloaded off the cars.

The big Scotsman, Jock Petrie, near Consul, came in 1913. He began hauling railroad material at once, while Mrs. Petrie held the homestead down. They live at Broadview now.

Mr. Reesor, Mr. Ziegler, Mr. Stevenson and so many settlers from the Vidora district made our house a home while away from home.

The Ziegler family came often, the girls sang the "Vidora Trail" instead of the "Utah Trail."

In August, 1910, while my baby was sick, a farmer called for water. Seeing my baby was so sick he went to his wagon, brought some medicine, gave me a few drops to give the baby. That was all he could spare as they were far from a drug store. The medicine was good. I was alone at the time and was not able to get more. I have forgotten the man's name. His married daughter's name was Mrs. Erickson. They worked for Mrs. Park Ziegler at the Whitemud. That was forty-five years ago. The baby died later on.

I could tell so many things that happened at the stopping-house. So many memories of those days and people we met.

I honor the pioneers of the south country.

Memoirs of Mrs. R. C. Morrison

(Bessie Will)

IT was in the summer of 1902 that my father decided to leave the sheep country of the Clarks Fork River in Northern Wyoming and seek out a better place to live in the far north. He and my elder brother Lee struck off one day to have a look at the prairie lands of the North-west Territories in Canada. They landed at Maple Creek in Assiniboia, somewhat over a hundred miles north of Chinook, Montana, or about ninety miles north of the boundary line between the United States and Canada.

Both my father and Lee were greatly impressed with the new country, and they decided immediately to move there and build up a new home in a place where grass grew as they had never seen it before. After being used to the sage brush and salt sage barrens of northern Wyoming, a very dry part of the State except where there was now and then a bit of irrigation, and with the salt sage grazed to the ground by thousands of sheep, the grass lands of Western Canada looked wonderful to them.

his name was Oswald Gimon.

We came to the top of the hills above the river we could see the

but they were too steep to attract me

a lot of duck nests.

and their son Freddie.

almost in the centre.

again meet both him and little Nellie

a block just waiting for the office to open. Often when a certain piece of land was to be open for filing on a certain date number one place outside the door would be occupied and held day and night for the usual six days regardless of the weather. The land-seeker would usually have a friend or someone take over and hold his place for him till he could go for his meals. Maple Creek was a very busy town in those days. The great settlement both north and south as well as those to the east has done much for Maple Creek as it is the only town of any size in that part of the country and the settlers from all that vast expanse of prairie do a lot of their trading there even yet. Practically everything the farmer requires may be purchased in Maple Creek and there is a good hospital with three good doctors and a large staff of nurses to care for the sick and afflicted.

One could tell of many other incidents of interest in those early years after 1902 such as great prairie fires in the knee-deep prairie grass where the blaze could be seen for miles and where the ranchers turned out in force to fight and save their pasture lands but will not take up more space suffice to say that in 1917 I married Robert Morrison and from then on my home has been in the Robsart settlement. In those first years on the homestead we like our neighbors farmed with horses and watched the sky for rain picked saskatoons and chokecherries for fruit went to Becker Creek for our share of big fat mullet sacks full of them made sausage out of jack rabbits and a bit of pork to make it tender to swallow. In the years I follow we used the old democrat buggy to scatter poison for grasshoppers to try and save our crops and bought a second hand Model T Ford to take our drives back in. We now boast a good car a truck the machinery necessary for sowing and reaping our crops and although the highline hasn't reached us yet we have a frig and a propane range and a power washer in the home.

I have been blessed with a good husband one daughter and two sons and now we have six grandchildren.

This whole neighborhood with its many problems in the early years have a lot of the modern conveniences that make farming easier both on the land and in the home.

The Morrison Story

(As told by R. C. Morrison)

NOT to weary anyone who might chance to read this act of "The early days of the Robsart District" I will make short mention of our lives before coming here.

After farming on rented land for several years around Valley City North Dakota we were looking for some land to call our own. Hearing that up in Canada they were giving away land for no I mounted to us whole half sections of good land I who ever would come and claim it we decided to leave the land of the Stars and Stripes and make a new start under the Union Jack.

Early in October 1909 my two brothers Arthur Fred and myself left Valley City and travelled as far as North Portal paying full fare and from there on in Canada at settler's rates of one cent per mile.

The country we intended to look over was some newly-opened land south of Maple Creek and the Cypress Hills in the south-

[illegible]

[illegible]

bunch. After all, they were here first

[illegible]

Arthur the East Half of 13

good boy, they let me through

[illegible]

homestead about the first of April

helped a lot

a profitable trip.

[illegible]

[illegible]

pneumonia

[illegible]

bor boy, and they are living with their six children on an irrigated farm at Rolling Hills Alberta Lloyd, our eldest son, is with the Prudential Insurance Company at New Westminster, B.C Tommy the youngest married a very fine girl, Margaret Palfy, of Wheeton, Saskatchewan, in the Fall of 1952 Now they have a fine baby boy and they live at Tulsequah, B.C where he works for the Trail Smelter Company

This has been a good community to live in We have had decided views on such things as politics, religion, etc but a spirit o' good natured tolerance has made for a good community spirit. No one in time of sickness, bereavement or disaster have failed to receive a helping hand I believe we lost the key to our house the first years we came here and have never felt the need of getting another

IN RETROSPECT

Where is that company of Pioneers who wagoned their way across the stoney trails of the Cypress Hills almost half a century ago? The Grim Reaper has claimed many Some have gone out looking for greener pastures We wish them well. A few of us have our roots sunk so deep in the soil, only time or circumstance will ever be able to move us.

We think of two World Wars that have been fought in this short period of history and especially the last one when a number of the boys of this community including our own son (our eldest son) were called overseas to fight in the three branches of the armed forces We remember the days and nights of anxiety when we heard of fierce battles being fought, when reports came of some that were missing, and others that would never come back, and all we, at home, could do was hope and pray and carry on.

I doubt if many would want to turn back Time's old clock and go through it all again Though at times we do get a homesick feeling when we talk about the old days, especially when the children were growing up.

And what about the future? We sometimes wish we could pierce the dark clouds of war and world unrest and see what lies on the other side, but a kind Providence forbids. So all we can do is hope and pray and carry on.

Pioneer Experiences of Einar Smith

It was the first days of November, 1909, that Evan Christensen and I came up from North Dakota to look for a homestead in Canada I had just received a letter from a friend John Storfield from Leonard, Minnesota, telling me that he and Louis Grande Chris Pederson and Chris Olson had just come back from their trip to Canada, where they had found good land, rolling prairie some forty-five miles south of Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, where three hundred and twenty townships had just been opened up for settlement and that they had each filed on a half section. He also gave me the description of the land he had filed on— the south half of Section 21-5-25, West of the Third Meridian. He also said that there was still plenty of land left which wasn't taken up.

I was only twenty-two years old at that time, with very little experience, and as this was the only information I had obtained

South half of Section 32.

logging camps.

[illegible]

[illegible]ater of good water

[illegible]

[illegible]ew years' time

[illegible]

[illegible] besides some Buffalo Chips.

[illegible]

[illegible] 1914 and Robsart was established

[illegible]

[illegible] of 1911.

[illegible]

big bunch

[illegible] I helped him to get established there during the end of that summer. The winter of 1913-14 I stayed around my home [illegible] hunting and playing in small towns among my big crowd of friends. [illegible] I started out for a trip down to the Northern States where I had my friends and relatives and [illegible] there for two years. When I heard of the big crop of Belmont [illegible] I decided to come back to Canada in the Spring of 1916. The train was so big [illegible] good that I could [illegible] Winnipeg and we brought a new steam threshing [illegible] the Red River Valley. We had rain [illegible] and the crops were ready to cut and the people had [illegible] threshing. We had [illegible] with us. We had two good weeks on the job. Mrs. Andrew Podesson [illegible] and a [illegible] Winnipeg. Then the engine [illegible] of the fire hazard. Wages were $3.00 per day for men and team in those days. We had a good crop [illegible] but the grain was badly damaged with frost [illegible] and gave good [illegible] and got very [illegible]. After threshing up I got [illegible] and went back to the city of Winnipeg. I was gone for [illegible] and a half years and came back in the Spring of 1920 with a wife and two children. I married one of Frank Bonnycastle's sisters. That summer [illegible] I worked for Wesley Thompson and the following winter we stayed on the Thompson Farm in Belmont where we again started up our old [illegible] in the spring of 1920 we moved to Winnipeg. We did remarkably well [illegible] years. At last it got the best I could see in way of making a living. The prospects in the spring of 1924 we started for British Columbia and landed here in Grandview with [illegible] on June 20th. We spent summer [illegible] a job here and have been here ever since. Early [illegible] years underground on a [illegible] and [illegible] years I have had a good job working [illegible] for the Grandview Dairy Plant making $250.00 per month. [illegible] free house, light, wood and [illegible]. Also a good garden. I have my own [illegible] of cows. I will soon be 67 years old but when I look back over those last forty-five years I will say that the happiest days of Belmont in Saskatchewan were the happiest of my life.

Experiences of Carl Podesson

of Creston, B.C., former resident of the Belmont-Vidora district

In compliance with a request for a sketch of my experiences as a resident of the south country of the Cypress Hills, from [illegible] south of Maple Creek, where Belmont and Vidora are now located, I am now endeavoring to give herein my experiences.

I came to the [illegible] 1913, [illegible] the latter half of the year. It was early in August, 1913, that I left the Swift Current district. The following spring about April 20th, my arrival in Maple Creek. I was [illegible] of a [illegible] Podesson. The five of us were: Alfred Anderson, Nels Nielsen, the two Lawrence brothers and myself. I had built a [illegible] house which we set up on a wagon on our arrival in Maple

morning as well as coffee.

laid down and gave up the ghost.

load up along came a rancher and a cowboy, each carrying a gun and an axe handle, and ordered me out of there. I felt rightly or wrongly that I had as good a right there as they had. They finally ride away and leave the ammunition and I loaded up my wood and went home. Later I went back with reinforcements and was not bothered much after that.

We had no water so had to haul water for cooking or drinking. For four years I hauled water in barrels for six months. During that time I dug six wells far down a half dozen feet nearer before I struck water a mighty sight feet.

During the eighties years spent on the prairie I had five hail storms in 1891 I had a great crop of wheat when a hail storm came along and destroyed it so we never had a cent out of that crop. A rancher stole my mare from me while I had not paid $300 for it by long we already away and he refused had his friend on hand. I can never forgive the Canadian government for not warning the ranchers to keep their thousands of cattle and horses off the land that we settlers were paying taxes on from the minute we filed on same.

My story is getting long so I will ring off.

Pioneer Experiences of Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Tillier

On May 20 1911 I left Minneapolis with all my belongings in a box car which consisted of Betsy our first Jersey cow, ten head of chickens, a walking plow, wagon, harness, six sacks of seed, a carpenter shack and household utensils for our new home in the west.

My wife and infant daughter Helen came on the train from Aldrich Minn. and arrived in Maple Creek the day I arrived.

Since I had no horses I had written to George Selby and asked him to meet us in Maple Creek. Sure enough he was there with four horses and the wagon which belonged to a nearby neighbor Mr. Pickett. After loading the two wagons with the most necessary articles we headed south. We had just gone about ten miles when I started to run so we had to camp at the ten mile grove. After having something to eat we made beds under the wagons and prepared for a wet night. Lucky we had a couple of blankets I spare so that we could arrange a shelter to keep out the rain on the cot where the baby slept.

The next morning being nice and sunny we were up bright and early to hitch up I got an early start. But he not behind when we had the horses hooked up to the wagon and ready to journey on our way. The horses hadent an awful lot pull. We were thoroughly pleased but after short coaxing and a little patience we got the wagon started and didn't dare stop. On and on we travelled south till we reached Swift Current. We stopped enjoyed a cup of hot coffee and then went on. To our surprise Jip ran from the rear of the wagon and where walking spell.

The second night we stopped at Gravelbourg where we enjoyed a hot supper.

Next morning we started on the final lap of our journey. On the afternoon of the third day we arrived at Chris Holmes's shack where we stayed till our one-roomed house was built. This was made from lumber I brought with me from Minneapolis. We were happy when we could move into our new home.

Then I built a sod barn to shelter our cow and chickens. Having no horses our only means of transportation was a bicycle or a wheelbarrow. Many trips of fifty miles by bicycle were made to Maple Creek, our closest town.

I recall one trip which is most outstanding in my memory. P. L. Dobson, who now is a resident of Maple Creek, asked if I would bring out a couple of plow shares. So one morning I had a fair load for a bicycle: one bushel bushel of potatoes, fifty pounds of flour, a box of groceries and two plow shares. It was no easy job pedaling that bicycle through fifty miles of mud and trail with a load like that. But I made it.

Money was scarce in those days, so when fall came I decided to go to Minnesota and to get a job at carpenter work. I wanted some cash to take home to buy a team of horses. I was kept busy building all winter. Then in the spring of 1911 I came back to my wife and the daughter. So in July Dobson took us into Maple Creek. The farmer wagon it was now going because we and our library were behind the wagon. We took her to Minnesota with us. She helped a lot by heavily supplying us with milk, cream and butter we needed. My wife had seventy dollars' worth of milk.

In the spring of 1911 I went down to Minneapolis to get two fine horses, Tiger and Daisy. On the way off they switched the box car off so that I could not get Jersey, one a golden jersey heifer, all a couple of pigs, a few hens, leghorn hens and other goods. Then we left out to our homestead. There were four of us now. While in Minneapolis we were blessed with our son, Olaf.

The summer went quickly by. We did a little cooking with our two horses and walking plow. We planted our garden and potatoes and reaped a fair crop. I sold vegetables. But by fall the crop of grain was a few [illegible] with our horses and racks to try to get work threshing near Cypress Lake. Pete Sigurd, Charlie and Chris Hidness and I went together.

Luck seemed to be against us. We went from one threshing machine to another [illegible] that they all had full crews. Finally we got a job which lasted but a week, when it rained and snowing and raining. Then we laid up for a couple of weeks. All I made threshing that fall was enough to buy a sack of flour, a ton of coal and a few groceries.

That same fall I started out for Eastend seeking for carpenter work. I got a contract and I paid a very stable. Later that winter a friend John Newberg from Minneapolis came out and together we built three more stables. My [illegible] restaurant and a garage. It was tough sleeping to get at the farmers we were. In those days I had to be housed in [illegible] Lake.

That was an [illegible] with very little snow and cross [illegible] mud, chinook winds sweeping down the valley.

In the spring I returned again to carry on my homestead for days, breaking more more land each year and trying to raise fine crops. We had ups and downs through the years. Sometimes we had good or fair crops. Then we had some dry years with grasshoppers, hail storms, frost and very little [illegible] for our labor.

With high hopes, faith and courage we came through those pioneer days to enjoy the great developments in modern farming of today.

Pioneer Experiences of Mrs. H. C. Tiller

(In the [illegible] Article Prepared
[illegible] the Spring
of 1912
(Mrs. H. C. Tiller)

THE [illegible] I shall never forget [illegible] as yet his wife had not joined him [illegible] had to get the chores done every day [illegible] fear and soon chased the cow home [illegible] our oldest son Olaf was born [illegible] fed the horses.

Once I remember going home when the fog come up so heavy I could not see the road ahead and it seemed I was on the wrong trail. The horse seemed to be pulling to one side and wanted to go off the trail. Then I thought I had better let the horse go where she wanted to go, knowing it had better sense of direction than I. Good old Daisy took me straight across the prairie to the right trail and home safely.

By this time Mrs. Larson had come out to join her husband who lived a bile over half a mile south of us. We spent many happy hours visiting back and forth, sharing the joys and sorrows of the pioneer days. We helped each other and made plans together.

After the railroad came through and Robsart became our town, Mrs. Larson and I often walked to town together to get the groceries and mail. Often we walked carrying a can of cream between us, with a plow share in the other hand. Then returning carrying our bag of groceries and enjoying our visit as we went along our way.

Pioneer days are soon forgotten. Since that time we have been blessed with three daughters, two sons and nine grandchildren. We now have a good farm with good farm equipment, a nice comfortable home with many of the modern conveniences, and a nice Meteor car. But on looking back I often think of those good old days as the happiest of my life.

The Peterson Family

(Clifford B. Peterson, Kurokl, Sask.)

My father P. L. Peterson, came west from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, in March 1910 leaving my mother as adopted sister Laura and my four brothers—Frank, 15, Howard, 13, Alfred, 10, Fred, 2, and myself, 5, at Maple Creek where Uncle John Asplund erected the first home-stead shack two miles east of where Robsart now stands, south west 7-5-24.

From the very first my father was disappointed with the country so much so that he started back to Maple Creek with the first load of furniture but met Hanson and Olson at the Whitemud and was persuaded by them to return south to the homestead. Ten days later he settled with his family on the homestead on April 24th, 1910. Alfred died following a short illness. The cause was unknown as there was no doctor. My father often remarked that the first thing he planted on the homestead was one of his sons.

Evan Christiansen was the man in charge and builder for the sod house that was to be my home for the next 22 years. It was a landmark and a haven for many a weary traveller. Its doors had no locks. It provided shelter for the Homestead Club" headed by Andy Hoyn and Edgar Smith when a prairie blizzard suddenly struck, and twenty-four men slept on the kitchen floor. It was the polling station for the 1911 election, my father acting as deputy returning officer. In 1912 it was the birthplace of my sister Mildred.

Being a mechanic and structural worker rather than a farmer, my father would go to the cities at times and take up his trade to keep the wolf from the door. February of 1913 found us all at Medicine Hat where my mother died at the age of 39. What gave my father the incentive to go back to the homestead I will

never know. Laura went back to the Soo, and aunt Mary and uncle John took care of Mildred. The patience, fortitude and endurance my father displayed will be recorded only in the memories of those who lived close to him. He was often encouraged and comforted by the many untold acts of kindness by women of the neighborhood toward his motherless boys.

The bumper crop of 1915 brought new hope and confidence only to be extinguished the next year by rust and frost followed by six years of drought. In 1918 the "flu" took Howard.

My father was always active in community affairs, he helped to organize the Olive School District, the Wheat Pool, etc.

He lived to see us grown up but he never realized his most cherished ambition, a home far removed from the homestead and the old sod house. There in 1929 the heart throbs of a pioneer were hushed and his children stood by his bedside to watch another chapter of Saskatchewan's history unfold.

P. L. Peterson, Haraldson, W. Howard, Mort Byington, two unknown, Frank Carleigh, George Hendrickson, Frank Johnson

Robert Daniels

IT was in the early Spring of 1911 that I came south of the Cypress Hills to my homestead. I did not eye-witness the great prairie fire which had swept these plains in the summer of 1910.

My first trip over these Cypress Hills I will never forget. We got caught in a blizzard. Not knowing the road or whereabouts of any building, we had to camp where we were. When morning came we were less than half a mile from Fred Grage's — the half way stopping place. The Klein family was travelling with us. They had a small tent which we managed to set up, in spite of the storm. They also had a small camp stove and a little

wood. The Kleins had a small baby. Our boy was four years old. It was an awful night, never to be forgotten, but today it is only history.

Then our first night in our new home. I had nailed the boards on the walls, but the roof boards were only laid on. I put up the bed and it was in this I brought my wife and child to spend their first night. The stars watched over us while we slept. Some place to bring a woman who was used to a nice comfortable home.

The first summer I cut and baled hay about twenty miles south for my stock. Drinking water was a problem. I hauled and carried it for miles. The Farwell Creek supplied us with wood. Those trips were both long and tiresome. One time I came with a load of wood in a blizzard was raging and it was forty below zero. I was very thankful when I reached home. Mr. Daniels is now farming in the irrigated district at Rolling Hills, Alberta, after living in the Rolsart district for twenty-eight years.

Uncle John Asplund and his photograph wagon, to whom the community is indebted for recording the pioneer history of the Rolsart district, with his camera.

The Thompson Family

(Dan Thompson)

THE Duncan Thompson family came in 1911 and took up a homestead, which H. E. Hanson helped them locate. Mother and we children were left on the homestead for two years while dad went out working. We did not have very much to eat. In fact, I believe we would have starved to death had it not been for our neighbors, Evan Christiansen and Einar Smith, who gave us rutabagas and a trap so that we could catch rabbits at night. Mother took the fat off the rabbits to fry our potatoes in and rabbit was our only meat since we did not have a gun to shoot anything with. I used to get so hungry I would eat grass

I remember the first porcupine that Ben Howell killed. He did not know it had quills. He reached down to pick it up and got his hand full of quills. After that we used to kill porcupine for meat because we could kill them with a club.

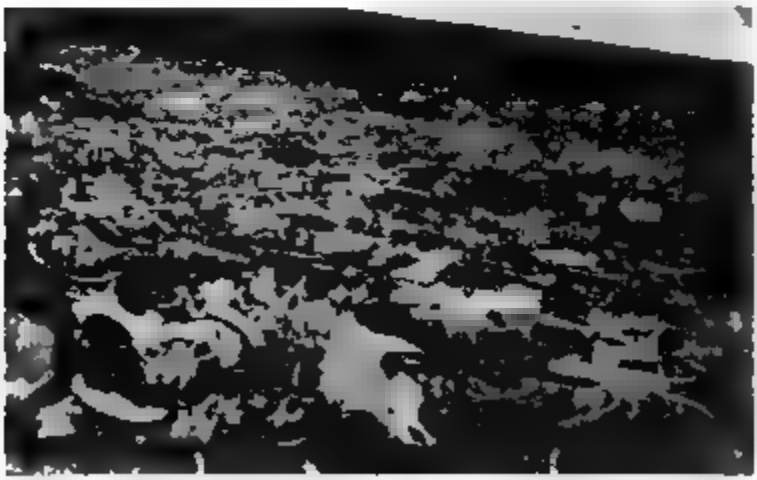
Water was a big problem. Mother and I carried water from the spring, one and a half miles for two years. In two big pails and two ten pound syrup pails. H. E. Hanson felt sorry for us and gave us a mule to haul our water. The old mule was so stubborn that we practically had to pull him to the spring but going home he would go so fast he would sometimes spill all our water and we have to go back for more.

The country was full of wild range cattle. Had I not been able to run so fast the cattle would have trampled me under.

I remember staying with Walter Howell for a couple of weeks when his dad went into Maple Creek. They had a box on the back of the shanty where they kept some salt pork. This seemed to attract the coyotes, because every morning when we opened the door there would be from thirty to forty coyotes around and we wouldn't dare go out. Some had long shaggy hair and one of these just about got me but somehow I managed to get away from him.

In 1913 I can remember the antelope lying dead in the deep snow. They just starved to death.

In 1916 I went to work for the Gilchrist Brothers. Yes, those times were sure hard. In the hungry thirties it was hard here in Dawson Creek, B.C. but we could grow potatoes and we had a rifle so we could go out and shoot moose. I never thought that I could live through such tough times and drive a 1954 car.



Remains of a herd of cattle that didn't weather the storm, in Dry Coulee, winter of 1906-7

Robsart Community History

(Mrs. Andrew Skouge)

had mail and groceries for his neighbor too.

In the midst of turmoil and work, worship was not forgotten. Sunday Services were regular. The worshippers were old and new neighbors who met to honor God and learn more of His.

In 910 my father, Rev. Elias Knudtson was the first minister in the neighborhood. He was Baptist. Dad, mother, my sister Myrtle, four and a half years old, grandma Jostad and my self (aunt) came from West Salem, Wisconsin. Grandma stood the trip fine. She was seventy-two years old, but took a keen interest in everyone and everything.

Four more children were born to our family, two brothers, Norman and Leonard, and two sisters, Lulu and Ruth. Ruth passed away at seven months.

Grandmother passed away April 19th, 1913, and was sent back to Wisconsin for burial.

Other deputs were Mr. and Mrs. Einar Eliason and family, Mr. and Mrs. L. P. Ringstad and family. The Sunday services were held in the different homes. When weather permitted, often an open-air service was held. There were Sunday School classes for the children. Several young bachelors organized a choir, which was a great help to the services.

Rev. Knudtson (Dad) officiated at the first wedding, Mr. and Mrs. John Bakken.

He also held the first funeral service. A young lad of four-teen years, son of Mr. and Mrs. P. L. Peterson. He was buried on his father's farm two miles east of the present village of Robert.

Dad loved the Gospel Ministry and whenever anyone was sick or in trouble he was always glad to bring a word of cheer and comfort. The Bible and Prayer were his skilled help.

In a new country, the people come from different countries and problems were sometimes perplexing. It took a keen sense of humor as well as a steadfast faith to be a help in each case. Dad had been blessed with all these merits and could therefore help his fellow man through many a difficulty.

Andrew Skauge, a husky young Norwegian from Trondheim, Norway, erected his first blacksmith shop in the Spring of 1911, on his homestead five miles North-west of the present village of Robert. This was a boon to the settlers as he could fix any broken machinery, shoe horses and set wagon wheels. This helped everyone save time so they could go home happy and more to work.

Lone School opened April 1st, 1912, with Miss Myrtle Martinson (later Mrs. M. Bringsten) as teacher. She was twenty-two years old. She loved children, and did her utmost to help her pupils along for the time they had met. Her kind personality and help-ful manner left a lasting memory by all who knew her. There was only six months school each year, as severe cold winters started early in the Fall and lasted until late in the Spring. The school house consisted of a few most necessary items: desks, table, globe, text books and a few library books. The interior was only the bare two by fours, so in the cold weather we froze and in the hot weather we nearly suffocated. There was never any disease amongst the children, only colds.

On May 17th, 1914, the Norwegian settlers decided to celebrate their National Day. A large tent was set up on the Lone school grounds. Every Norwegian cook got busy and made some delic-

[illegible]

he also operated a small store.

[illegible]

line was completed.

[illegible]

gotten.

[illegible]

are huge cultivated fields

[illegible]

just right for two.

■

Robert Phoenix Review the Years

Mr and Mrs Fred Martin and Mr and Mrs Andrew Bolstad were also pioneers and helped to make homes. But the East held a longing in their hearts for them to return to Wisconsin.

Dan Swartz, Martin Larson, Herb Smith, Frank Riley, Shorty Carr were all men who worked hard and sacrificed a lot to help build up our community in the early days when hard work was not spared in these parts.

Mr and Mrs R. Knudtson came to live in the community in 1917. Mrs Knudtson being a trained nurse from Norway was a life-saver many a time. She drove over many a rough road and in bitter to be present to help a new life enter this world. She spared no efforts to mothers from death. She lived to see her own grandchildren grow up around her. But she has now gone to her reward with many memories left behind of her useful life of service to our community.

Since I have mentioned by name so many of the old-time neighbors, I shall like to mention a few more. Ole Furseth, a young man from Trondhjem, Norway, was also a homesteader. He was a jolly sort and quite young. His good humor and hearty laugh made everyone happy when in his company. He returned to Norway and made his home there.

Ole Syverson came from Valley City, North Dakota. He married Ida Anderson, daughter of Mr and Mrs. Alfred Anderson. They too built up a farmstead and reared a family. Mrs Syverson passed away several years ago. Mr Syverson lives here at Robert near his son Eddy and family.

In 1914 several babies in the district died from the dreaded cholin' disease—summer complaint.

Mr and Mrs E. Olsen buried two children at the same time. Ruth, two years old and Hasbeck, an infant. They were the first ones to plant a loved one in the cemetery, half a mile west of the present Village of Robert.

Mrs. I. P. Rogstad died in November 1914 from cancer. She is also buried in Robert cemetery.

1915 brought a record crop, and all was going wonderfully. 1916 crops were good, but much damage from frost. Then the men began to get their First World War army calls. War began to cast its gloom over the community. Crops were very good again for a number of years.

On June 23rd 1917 on a bright summer day I became the bride of Andrew Skaage. We were married at our home and did get married the ceremony. We have lived here at Robert ever since. We raised five boys and one girl. Elmer, Arthur, Leland, Kelly, Irene and Edward. All are now married. We have fourteen grandchildren.

In 1918 the Spanish Influenza took many lives in our community. The people were debilitated by war, crop failures and the flu epidemic. The bright light in the Fall of 1918 was the Signing of Peace.

As time and years passed by people moved away and farms became larger.

On August 8th 1964 dad passed away and is now resting from his labors in the rural cemetery half a mile west of Robert.

What the future holds is unknown, but the spirit of good citizenship and kindness to one another is still holding out a friendly spirit in our community.

Homesteading Life

(By Ole Wenone)

I [illegible]

a tent.

as they were played out. We had no wood with us, only wet lignite coal. We got a small fire started with our tent pegs, got our shoes thawed out and off as they froze to our feet. Toward morning we got going again and finally got home late in the afternoon. We were feeling shaky for a few days afterwards, but felt no ill-effect from it. The homestead shack was very nice to come back to after that trip.

Lots of happenings could be mentioned here from our homesteading days but space will not allow it.

However, there is one comical incident that I would like to mention. One of my close bachelor neighbors made his own bread. He had a bread mixer and mixed his bread in the evening and took it to bed with him to keep it warm. On this particular night he had a friend staying with him. They went to bed, put this mixer with its contents in between them in bed. The next morning I came there and as I opened the door I thought I was a witness to a murder. The owner of the place had his friend lying on his stomach in bed and he sat over him with a great big bread knife and actually using it on him, it looked to me. But what really happened was that this mixer with the dough tipped over during the night and the dough had run into the bed. In the morning when they woke up his friend's underwear was plastered with bread dough. So that's what he was doing when I came in, cleaning this mess of his friend's seat. So it turned into a good laugh instead of a murder.

In 1916 Einar Smith and I bought the first new steam threshing outfit in the Robsart district. Smith's share was later taken over by Einar Eliason. We threshed with it for many years.

In 1921 I was married to Gertie Thormoerth, who came to the district with her folks in 1913.

John Bakken, homesteader

JOHN BAKKEN came from Bismark, North Dakota, to Canada early in the Spring of 1912, and worked at Swift Current making foundations, etc.

In the fall I came out here from Maple Creek with Mr. Ragstad, who brought the lumber out for my homestead shack. After a forty-mile drive from Maple Creek I stayed over night with Mr. Ragstad. The next day I went over to Mr. Eliason's and he came over and helped me build my shack. It took two or three days.

Then I went to Lethbridge for a month before coming back to spend the winter here. The following Spring I went back to Swift Current and worked all summer until war broke out which stopped all work. There I met my future wife. We came back here together to be married that same Fall by the Rev. E. Knudtson. Incidentally, it was the first wedding performed here. Together we moved into the homestead shack in November 1913. Mr. Bakken was bereaved by the passing of his first wife.

The present Mrs. Bakken came out from Maple Creek in May 1911 together with her mother and family. They rode out with Arthur Morrison, who drove a team of broncs that nearly got out of control. When they got to the Whitemud it was so muddy that they soon tired and calmed down. He told us that we were soon home, in all those hills but we soon found ourselves on the prairie and home. There were eleven of them. Mrs. Bak

ken's first husband Mr Brekhus and her father Mr Westwig had gone out a month earlier from North Dakota with cattle, horses and a few chickens so they had a home built when they arrived. They (the Brekhus') with their two children and the Westwigs who had five children lived together for two months. Then the Brekhus' moved into their own two-room house which was late covered around with sod to keep warm through the winter They built sod barns, finishing after the frost, from which Mr Brekhus got rheumatism He was in bed from Christmas until March and was then taken to Maple Creek in a covered wagon where, after two weeks, he passed away

Mrs Brekhus came back to the homestead where a baby was born to her without the assistance of a doctor In the Spring a fire had to be built outside to scare the wolves away from a little calf in the yard. Lonely years went by Mrs. Brekhus had enough crop to get along on In 1915 she got 777 bushels of wheat from 35 acres of land. In 1918 she married John Bakken

Mr Stockdale had the first shack, 1909, down around Erick Johnson's. He was the manager of the land office in Maple Creek after the first World War

Mr Ole Wenaas came in 1911 Mr Einar Smith got a steam engine in 1916.

Mr Andrew Skauge came out from Maple Creek in a snow storm, walking He nearly froze to death, but at last found a shack

The song choir started and the men walked in snow sometimes waist deep to get to the places of practice They often stayed at these places until there was nothing left to eat but pancakes.

The Whitemud school was started in 1917 Pupils were eight Teacher was Miss Dickson who stayed at Gilchrist's and rode six miles.

They built the grade over the Whitemud in 1911

Memories of Early Settlers' Days at Robsart

1910-1955 S. H. Section 1-6-26. W 3rd
(N K. Neilson)

IN the Spring of 1910 I landed in Maple Creek I was just twenty-three years old. After I served eighteen months in the Danish Army I decided to try my luck over the ocean.

On the Liner there were lots of emigrants, who went to all parts of America. I got acquainted with people from the States. It didn't take long to persuade me to come along to Valley City North Dakota. I had nothing to lose and one place was just as good as the next When a person is young and full of ambition everything look bright and rosy

While I worked in Valley City I worked out as a farm hand and did carpenter work because that was my trade

One day I met lots of Danes and got acquainted with Carl Pedersen, Larsen Brothers, Jens Pedersen and Alfred Anderson They were very enthusiastic about going to Canada to take up land and get rich in no time That's just what we all thought After we all agreed to go a day was set when we could make the journey to the promised land

freezing

of the country. [illegible] another, but that is pioneer life.

[illegible] over the sand carrying off stones.

[illegible]

[illegible] my outfit and do my own work.

[illegible] or other Indian relics.

[illegible] and there was much snow.

[illegible] to be myself again.

Time marching on. Years of hard work, [illegible]

came along. Many new settlers came and I had neighbors around me. They all had big families so it wasn't lonesome any more and friendly warm lights shone through the windows at night. It was in some way security. In case of need there was help at hand. It was nice to have new friends and we spent many happy hours and evenings together, always trying to help each other and to give a helping hand where it was needed. There were Mr. and Mrs. Behrman, Rodewalts and Grandpa Howell and his three sons and family. Thompsons and Hakkens all had many children so the next things was to build a school house. This was completed in 1916. On Whitemud school house I saw all these children going to school for first time. Often they came to my place for a drink of water or to see my pigeons, ducks and geese. We enjoyed each others company. Those children are now grown up and have children who in turn go to school. That's the second generation that I have seen growing up. Guess I'm getting old. Those early settlers with their large families had a very hard struggle and many untold heart breaking experiences came to everybody's door. Many tears were shed during pioneers days.

There was one good thing, we were all in the same boat. When it came to distress and sorrow friendship and the neighborly spirit was a wonderful thing in those early years. We had many pleasant evenings at some homes or had dances or card games in the school house. It all helped to make me forget the daily task.

Now I must come to the end. I could go on and tell much more of bygone days. My friends with whom I came to this country have all passed on to a happier hunting ground. I am the only one left of the group. "It is later than I think."

The next generation will never know or experience what we old settlers went through.

Remembrances

(Isaac Dahl)

WILL hereby try and write down a few of my memories and experiences from our pioneer days here on the western prairies, especially here in the Robsart district.

In the early fall of 1910 I and two of my brothers-in-law, Thom and John Berhe at that time living in Bisbee, North Dakota, decided to take a trip to Canada where we had heard was all kinds of carpenter work going on, building new towns and cities. We landed in Swift Current and got work at once. But the wages were small, between two and three dollars per ten hour day. So this didn't look like to be a get rich quick procedure. Especially for me that had left my wife and three children in Norway, Jofred, Borghild and Berge.

I came here with the same idea as thousands of my country men before and after me have had. We planned on coming over here for three or four years, make a pile of money and then go back home again and settle down and live happy all our lives. Well, after two years of working for wages by days or hours, I had no money laid aside. If I had any money to spare I had to send it home to my family to support them. So in the Fall of 1912 I decided to go out and look for a piece of land somewhere. It so happened that Bernt Knudsen came to Swift Current at that time. I knew Bernt and his parents in Norway well before. He

[illegible]

Storfield and Mr Grande and family

[illegible]

me and my family

[illegible]

everything. Like for instance in 1933, when we were hailed out only seventy bushels of wheat. That same winter on New Year's Eve our barn burned down. We lost three head of cattle, one pig and most of our chickens, all the harness and all the feed and many other things went up in smoke. Our six milk cows were left standing out in the snowdrifts. But the neighborhood came to our assistance and in a week's time we had a very good straw shed built and the neighbors gave us all the feed for the horses and cattle that was needed. In this connection I would like to mention our nearest neighbor for many years, Mr. and Mrs. Martin Brunas; they were actually real friends in need as well as indeed.

Well, I had better close now because I am not fit for this kind of work. If I could have used my own native language it would have been a different thing. There is enough material from what has happened here in this district these last forty-five years to make a real interesting book, if the right qualified person took interest in this kind of work.

Memories of Pioneer Days

(By Evan Christianson, Robinart, South half 33-5-23, W. 3rd)

THE light team of horses jogged along slowly as we gazed at the seemingly endless stretch of prairie in front of us and on both sides of the trail. This was on the second day of November, 1909. My friend Einar Smith and I had just stepped off the train at Maple Creek and hired one of those "Locators" with his team and buckboard, to help us locate homesteads in the newly-opened up territory about forty miles south of this town.

Pamphlets and "Land-seekers' guides" that had come to our attention in North Dakota had for some time been distributed by the Canadian Government. These pamphlets and posters had described this particular part in glowing terms as "The Last Best West." This we must come and see. We did. Here south of these beautiful Cypress Hills, and that vast stretch of virgin prairie that had beckoned to us in the posters. What more? We could get one hundred and sixty acres of free land. Another hundred and sixty for little or nothing, the Settlers Guide informed us.

So this was it, and the Canadian Government had chosen the year well in making its call for settlers to this newly-surveyed wilderness. Here was grass galore, tall and thick, that bent before hoofs and wheels as we drove along, taking directions with the aim of the hills and guides in an effort to follow section lines, where we knew the numbered iron pegs must be found. The number on these pegs we could then compare with our maps to determine what parcels of land were still "open." Here were no fences, no huts or homes, no plowed farmers or fields. No nothing, except what Nature had created in its own good time. Up till now, only Indians, coyotes and buffalo had roamed here.

It had been justly said: "There is no other civilization without the association of men." It can perhaps be said civilization of these parts of the prairie started to take shape in our minds when we finally located our homesteads. Mr. Smith and I and hundreds of others, who later became our neighbors.

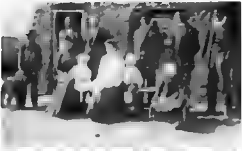
There was, however, one deep rutted wagon trail we had followed for about thirty-five miles or well past the Whitewood, which

is at the mouth of the [illegible] by the [illegible] part of the year, after forty-four years

[illegible] sunny November days in 1909

[illegible]

[illegible]



A [illegible] at the home of [illegible] Chamberlain, 1911

[illegible] Henry Abbott [illegible] Chamberlain [illegible] Abbott [illegible]
Albert and George Abbott

[illegible]

washed and served me until 1916

[illegible]

as [illegible]

and my own

[illegible]

[illegible]

and late nights.

[illegible]

in the South Country

[illegible]

main topic of interest and discussion.

[illegible]

there were many involved in the brawl

[illegible]

and saddle horses

[illegible]

now is blind.

[illegible]

[illegible]

with a grubstake in my pocket

[illegible]

learning something all the time.

[illegible]

Caton ranch

[illegible]

[illegible] I could

Abbott stores in Robsart

[illegible]

tempo

The [illegible] Farmer Elkins and Rev. Knudtson and owned Lars [illegible] It is still in operation [illegible] west of the Village of Robsart

The Mennonites of Rosenfeld [illegible]

I went back to Minnesota in the Fall of 1929 [illegible] working enough to work. I stayed there with relatives on a farm helping with chores for my board and room.

[illegible]

[illegible] up from the winter's wages.

[illegible]

[illegible] south

[illegible]

By the Fall of [illegible] [illegible]

months

In the Fall of [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

territory or south country

The [illegible]

In the [illegible] was growing by leaps and bounds [illegible]

the growing community

showed what this land could produce?

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] of the community spirit of those days.

Another Chapter in the Story of Early Pioneers

(Mrs. Mate Kjeldgaard)

I [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

expensive to build and get the lumber hauled out in those days. The house was not finished inside, it was just too warm but it turned out to be a lovely winter so we got through it fine. We didn't have too much fuel on hand so we burned a lot of twisted hay.

The next summer Paul worked for Henry Behrman. The children and I were alone during the week. We burned cow chips like most all other early settlers. I was always scared of prairie fires and of the storms. Whenever a bad electric storm came up the house would rock so much in the wind that I would take the mattress and bed down the cellar and sleep there for the night. We had a sod barn and chicken house the first years. I brought chickens with me from North Dakota. An old friend, Mrs. Mada Anderson, who lived at Senate was kind enough to loan a one of her cows. The second year after moving to the farm we had a good crop and was able to build ourselves a decent barn, and the following year we bought five work horses from Sam McIntosh who lived on a ranch near Maple Creek. We were pretty proud of our first horses even if they were all broncs. A few days work in the field and any funny notions they had at one time were all gone.

There was one incident that I am sure Mrs. Arthur Morrison wouldn't want me to leave out, and that was when we stopped at the homing place where they lived. The first day we were moving out Ethel (the baby) had been crying all the way as she did not like to be wrapped up. She was fine at Mrs. Morrison's but when we started out again it started all over again until we arrived at our destination. Needless to say, she slept good that night.

Later on times improved, especially during the First World War, but I really never enjoy good times like that when thousands of poor souls have suffered for it. This much I think will cover that part of my life as an early homesteader here in the Rabbart and Valora districts.

Pioneer Experiences of the Sunde Family

(Mrs. Lena Erickson)

ON June 7th 1913 we left Webster, South Dakota for Canada, the land of opportunity, so we thought. We shipped all our belongings which consisted of: forty head of cattle, eight head of horses and our household goods, etc., as far as Assiniboia. That was the end of the Westbourne-Lethbridge line at that time. We pitched three tents on the outskirts of town, rented a 10 x 14 shack. Pastured the stock a mile out of town. We walked out and milked eight cows morning and night and sold the milk around town. Had six boarders, one of whom was Uncle John. We cooked in the shack, slept in the tents. Were fifteen in the family besides the boarders.

Shortly after we got to Assiniboia we found that the road would not be finished further west until the Spring of 1914.

We then decided to load everything in covered wagons and start out. We left Assiniboia the first of August. Had many experiences along the way.

At that time there was no fast rising yeast, so we set bread every night, mixed it in the morning. Stopped four hours in the middle of the day to rest the horses and cattle. So that is when we baked the bread. We were very fortunate to find kind

[illegible] had a lot of fun.

[illegible] tire.

[illegible] our faces with netting.

[illegible] was our only help with the cattle.

[illegible] went to Riewold's and had a nice visit.

[illegible] some neighbors.

[illegible]

Pioneer Days

(Written from R. Alex Tuffs, Alberta)

T[illegible]

living in our own homes

[illegible]

[illegible] Alberta.

Memoirs of Pioneer Days

(Mrs. Frank Hughson)

M[illegible] two cows, a dog and a few hens.

[illegible] a time to get things in shade again.

[illegible] in and getting settled on the land.

After the railroad came and Rickert got started we had church services in Rickert at first in a hall over Mr. Ashcraft's store. Eventually we got a building and had an organized church.

From 1910 [illegible] years for the homesteaders getting [illegible] 1911 [illegible] 1912 were not very good years. In 1913 there was a bumper crop and everyone had been hard and went ahead for a few years.

The things that have been in my memory are: The [illegible] the Wild Horse River and the [illegible] would have land for my stock. The flu epidemic in 1918-1919 when the train carrying world news carried no fuels.

They came from England, too

(Mrs. Marjorie Humphrey)

MRS. Marjorie Humphrey, her mother, two brothers and a sister came to Canada from Gloucestershire, England, in 1909. Maple Creek, where my father was waiting for us, having [illegible] up a homestead [illegible] Maple Creek [illegible] Mary [illegible] and Marjorie [illegible]

We had [illegible] years when we arrived. We [illegible] enough of [illegible] We had a big [illegible] with a road [illegible]

In those days the Mounties [illegible] to all the settlers [illegible] to see them and [illegible] on a road on [illegible] which we thought [illegible] Later on we started going [illegible] for us the head of [illegible] to the [illegible] Dances was in full [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] a [illegible] Sunday [illegible] a good [illegible] a bachelor [illegible] the supper and [illegible] you the [illegible] stepfather [illegible] and my [illegible] He had [illegible] a French [illegible] and there [illegible] doing nothing. We and [illegible] were there. [illegible] husband [illegible] brother will but fortunately it was in the deep snow.

Many will remember Windy Simpson. He was at the dances and played on his banjo. The gentleman he had [illegible] with

is now married. They are out for from Medicine Hat.

In the later years we rented our ranch and moved to Maple Creek as my stepfather wanted to go into business here. My sister and I hated to leave the ranch and our dear horses.

The first year my sister was married she and her husband lived at the A X as I mentioned. At that time it belonged to Tom Drury. It was where I was out visiting and staying with my sister that I met my husband then to be. After that my brother ran the A X and the other the Dutton or as it was called the Caton ranch.

In the winter of 1914 my youngest brother became ill and died. After helping to nurse him in school brother Reginald volunteered and went to war in 1915 with the the machine gun unit 20th Battalion. He and his three sons were [illegible] while carrying Doughboys. Reginald was in hospital eight months first in France and then in England. He was gone three years and came back to Canada in 1918 after being discharged from the hospital.

Some years before we left our ranch my brothers were working for the East and West Cattle Company and also for Billy and Mart Wilson of Greystone. They both worked at the Dwight a Strong ranch where they were putting in the big barn. Reginald was also foreman on the C P R working from Medicine Hat to Swift Current and was to the Crows Nest on the Frank. He just missed the disaster each time that buried the men.

Speaking of storms in the winter of 1915 my husband thought he would go over to Bartlett's and get a cow and calf he had been told were there. He left quite early one day and got there for hours but did not find the cow. A high wind and blizzard came up. They boggie Walter to try as he could and we anything but he said I was alone with our seven or eight months old baby and he was left to get home. He was riding my pet buckskin saddle horse and he just let him go. He he eight hour straight home. It was so cold he could not keep his face up in one where he was going. I was so afraid he would not get home and he said [illegible] of his [illegible] and off. I put he baby in a padded box I had made for a play pen. I took a harness and two spider dresses on to the two by six of the roof and the [illegible] big [illegible] of wire and wrapped it as tight as I could. I was partly [illegible] by them but it kept the roof on. That was [illegible] when that frame [illegible] to death against a fence. He [illegible] stable and wondered [illegible] and was not just I then [illegible] of us.

Many of our neighbors will remember a bad blizzard that came up and caught Percy and Hubert when they had gone to Bidwell for a load of coal and groceries with a bobsleigh team. A [illegible] had been taken by mistake [illegible] of Bidwell. They got back as far as Dubois where [illegible] they stay over night for they were wet and cold. Many of our kind friends put lights in their windows hoping they would get home.

At Kincaid one day Mrs Harry Hewerson asked me if I remembered riding a horse in Maple age of her. It was her father's horse. She was Miss Br [illegible] then and I was Miss Harris.

The Moriartys arrive

(Mrs. J. E. Moriarty)

Mr. and Mrs. [illegible] by homesteaders' rates.

[illegible]

chestra

[illegible]

with us till April, 1912

[illegible]

Prairies

[illegible]

not so to Mrs. Moriarty, a former school teacher in her native North Dakota. She quickly overcame this handicap by teaching her small brood their alphabet at home. However, a school was built in 1913 by Jack Mcnaught and called Clover Valley. J. E. Moriarty was the first secretary of this District, a position he held for some years. The first teacher at this school was Miss Birdie Badger, daughter of the rancher Badgers.

In the Spring of 1914 the two older Moriartys and the two older Hansen children started at this school, driving a single buggy and a grey pony. There were eleven children enrolled and the teacher was Rose Edgar, also a pioneer. Incidentally, the Hansen girl mentioned above is now Mrs. Albert Anderson.

There was excitement. The pioneer country was now coming out of its infancy. We were now to have the train. A railroad was coming through, and on the fourth day of June 1914 Ed. Moriarty loaded his family in his "Surrey" and drove to the nearby Pirie Village of Victoria to watch the first train pull into the station. The first train they had seen since here a rival from North Dakota 1910, a thrill to these pioneer folk.

This was the year of the big crop of 915,000 bushels per acre and wheat selling at $1.00 per bushel. Pioneer days were fading away, now a busted life. A municipality was organized, and J. E. Moriarty was one of the first councillors. But still these pioneer memories linger in the hearts of family and many good neighbors who so bravely endured the joy and sorrows of the frontier days in the land of the powers.

Mr. Moriarty passed on in 1942 but Mrs. Moriarty recalls all the dates given with much clarity, and are early, having given those dates. Her family has grown. She is a very lively active grandmother (75 years) does her own work, has a lively interest in gardening and community affairs. And she love to chat with old neighbors about those pioneer days.

Rube Gilchrist Reviews the Years

(Rube Gilchrist)

It was first learned in the years of 1878-1879 that cattle could live and thrive out of doors all winter in the Northwest Territories.

Two trading companies, the I. G. Baker and T. C. Powers companies had trading posts at Fort Walsh and Fort Macleod. They used bull teams to do the freighting from Fort Benton, at the head of the navigation on the Missouri River into the Northwest Territories.

In the year mentioned some of these bull teams got caught in early storms and were turned loose and abandoned, leaving them to shift for themselves. When spring came the teamsters returned, located the oxen and found them ready to get to work. This proved that the Canadian west was something of a year round cattle country in 1880.

In 1883 cattle were being trailed from Wyoming and Montana to be shipped via rail from Maple Creek to American markets and also to stock the Canadian west.

In 1886 when companies obtained large lease holdings in the N.W.T. their stock raising information had come from experience of those warmer climates where conditions would not be comparable to Canadian winters. Hence during the severe winter of

[illegible] among them the S.T.V. which was almost wiped out

[illegible] as follows. Four year old [illegible] per head [illegible]

[illegible] cattle

[illegible]

[illegible] and no losses

[illegible]

Bobcat Pelts Bring Big Price

Prices started to improve by 1938-39. In 1939 another freezing March blizzard took heavy toll. The outfit lost 500 cattle from sundown to dawn.

For the past forty years there have been prophecies of the pending doom referring to the decline of the mink raising industry. Seventy years ago the area had three major industries: trapping, ranching and lumbering. Trapping is now confined to the north. Pelts shifted from skins to dollars. Mink ranching alone arrived when it first put down its roots. There is no indication that it should decline.

In 1940 another war, during which man took another asking and took it back in many ways. It brought the prices of all livestock: [illegible] for steers and $40.00 for cows. There was a big demand for livestock products with higher prices in the United States. The Canadian government then dared an embargo on the export of cattle and meat which gave back the producers at a lower price but which set up the United States market. The producer. The packing united [illegible] in 1946.

In 1950 access to the American markets continued. Inflation was partly responsible for raising prices causing steers to sell at $400.00 and better, cows at $275.00 to $300.00, with calves at $175.00.

Foot and mouth disease struck in 1952 resulting in quarantine and lower prices.

The consumer refused to purchase meat at the quoted prices. Meat continued to pile up with consumers refusing to buy in any amount. When a price adjustment was made meat was eaten in increasing amounts per capita. Supply and demand still seem to work.

1953-54 were stable as to price structure.

Geologists tell us that these Cypress Hills withstood the grinding forces of the glaciers. Some of the structures could have stood off over 50 years of the shakedowns.

The western country in this area are friendly people. They will set up at a place in the side room, light they will supply you with a bed and dinner for figure of the day.

We would like to say [illegible] Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan has [illegible] years. We have seen you develop, we've seen you grow, thriving, [illegible] you to maturity and on to your Golden Jubilee. Fifty years and you still look good to us. You have put wind the space and the liberty we have come forward with by ambition, resourcefulness and the work. Having helped to make you what you are.

We say Congratulations on your guard for our Saskatchewan!

It was in March 1930 that I borrowed forty dollars and bought a ticket from Halifax, Nova Scotia as far west as it would go, which was Wapella, then in the Northwest Territories and later [illegible] Saskatchewan.

To a fifteen year old boy from the seaboard this country looked big and raw. I got a job with a farmer at eight dollars a month with board and started to drive an [illegible] team. I didn't know much about them [illegible] and didn't know [illegible] of the things he did [illegible] while driving [illegible] they decided they had had enough work [illegible] grown pulling the [illegible] right in the middle of the bluff where I had to leave them. I walked a mile to get an axe to chop them out. Another time they took a notion to walk out into the middle of a slough with a walking plow. When they got up to

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

In 1926 I married Mildred Bacon, whose parents ranched on Farwell Creek. They celebrated their 60th anniversary in 1984. They had come with teams of horses from Havre, Montana, in 1914. My wife and her sister Merle, now Mrs. Hastings, who was post mistress at Robsart for many years, rode horse-back from Havre, driving a herd of horses. She recalls that a drenching rain deserted most of their chickens and soaked them all to the skin as they were going up the Eaton hill. A small cabin with a dirt floor was the only shelter when they arrived, and tents were put up to dry out in.

Our two children, Mary and Bill, grew up with the ranch and are both interested in the business. It is a satisfaction to know that Bill is both willing and able to carry on with the livestock, and improve it as he goes along.

Sandy was the next one of the brothers to marry. His wife was a Jean Gilchrist, of Maple Creek. They also now live in Calgary.

Joe, the youngest brother, was married to Muriel Hargrave, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hargrave, who ranched near Walsh for many years. Tom Hargrave's father was a Hudson Bay factor in the early days and one of the first settlers in Medicine Hat. Joe is still ranching at Deer Creek in Alberta.

Moirs have long history as pioneers

(Otto Moir)

AROUND the year 1830 and on for years to come Brigham Young was starting new settlements in the United States of America. He naturally wished for more followers of his faith, the Latter Day Saints, perhaps better known as the Mormons. Some of his followers or missionaries would go to Europe, England, Scotland, etc., which was from where they or their ancestors had come originally. These missionaries would get new followers of their faith and many were anxious to come to the New World.

It must have been on account of the Mormons that grandmother Moir came to America from Glasgow, Scotland. She landed at Buffalo, New York, in 1867 with two children and an elderly aunt. They crossed the plains a trek of many hundred miles, to Salt Lake City, Utah with a Mormon wagon train. Due to the heavy loads in these ox wagons, only the aged and very young were allowed to ride. This meant that grandmother and her seven year old daughter must walk while aunt rode and held the baby of eleven months. This babe was Charles John Moir.

It was tough travelling as comforts were few and even food was very scarce at times. The weary travellers were down to just soup made of boiling rawhide in water.

It was three years later that grandfather Moir came to America. It took him that length of time to find grandmother who had left him in Scotland due to his liquor habit. They set up housekeeping in Salt Lake City for a time, then moved to Idaho. Four more boys (John, Clarence, Alexander and Lester) were born in either Utah or Idaho. It was in Idaho that grandfather taught school. Among his pupils were the older Wallace family, half brothers and sisters to Elvy Wallace, who now resides on the Wylie ranch south of Maple Creek.

Charles Moir worked as a cowhand for the "Elko Bale Company" in Nevada. He also trailed cattle up the famous Chisholm

Trail from the south [illegible] on the open range at Big [illegible] [illegible] water and open space.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

The [illegible] Anderson and Charlie Moir

The [illegible] are now the W. E. Caton ranch

The [illegible] increase again.

[illegible]

dington and the Wylies. We got our mail once a month from Lanfield, the post office house run by Jim Ross.

The winter of 1906 there was an election dance at the R.N.W.M.P. Post on Farwell Creek just north of the Bulow ranch buildings. I (Otto) being a long legged kid ready to observe everything, remember that dance. Miles Bulow and John Muir were the violinists. Whisky was plentiful and couples on the floor were often stopped and given a drink poured from a jug into a tin cup. It was here I first saw the man called "Dry Coulee" Nelson.

In 1906 John Anderson's wife (née Mary Scott) and a child were also buried in the same plot as his mother had been. This year my dad and his brothers went into the winter with 1000 head of cattle. The next summer they rather of 85 head, the rest having perished during the hard winter. A cattle rancher and buyer by the name of Behrens, was told the next spring that there was only one blizzard for winter but it lasted for 90 days at 30 degrees below zero. It has gone from history as what the ranchers call "The hard winter of '96 and '97."

It was 1909 that the Charlie Moir family moved back to Alberta but the open spaces of Saskatchewan seemed to call them. In 1910, the year the country started to settle, we moved back to our previous stamping grounds north of Maple Creek on the Davis Creek.

The country was open and no fences so all the ranchers went together and formed a "pool round up wagon." Charlie Moir was usually elected captain of the round up. This round up would pick out in the spring and not return home until fall. Their work was to throw cattle back on their own range brand, dig for strays, gather the beef, and throw the rest of the cattle back on their winter range.

Now the country was being thrown open for homestead beg and homes. The railroad came in 1914. Then ended the long full trips to Maple Creek for the yearly supplies. Our new address was Robsart and has been ever since.

Grandfather Moir at the age of 88 passed on in 1916 and was buried at Maple Creek. In the cemetery record there it is shown that he is the oldest person in that cemetery. John passed on in the fall of '21 at Medicine Hat and also buried at Maple Creek. Alex died in Maple Creek December 1964 and buried there. Clar died at Lewistown, Montana January 1968 and buried there. Lenley at the time of writing resides in the home for the aged at Melfort, Sask.

Father and mother moved into Robsart in the early 20's but back to the ranch in 1928. Mother passed on in October 1938 in Medicine Hat. Father followed her in May 1938 in Hanna-town. They were both laid to rest in Maple Creek. There were Otto and Charlie still reside near Robsart.

To the readers life may sound hard, with so many trials and tribulations but it was not entirely so. Many happy hours were spent visiting neighbors, listening to a grub-line rider or at a "Kitchen sweat" dance. The wagon pulled was always a welcome visitor as he often brought the mail and news of the community.

Robsart

—a short history of the community and its people

(C. E. Lightfoot)

S[illegible]

left alone

[illegible]

before, now had land and a home

[illegible]

the first store keeper and assistant post master of this district. The mail contract was awarded to Neil Johnson. The first mail to arrive at Rosthorn was drawn by horse and stoneboat, a kind of rough sled. Groceries for the store were hauled by horses and wagon from Maple Creek, the nearest town, fifty miles across the Cypress Hills.

Combining homestead duties with other activities, the professions gave help and comfort to the community. Dr. X. F. Offerman, a chiropractor or as we often say, a rubbing doctor, homesteaded a few miles west. He was often called to aid the sick as was Dr. Tribblett, one of the lucky boys who was an osteopath, another kind of rubbing doctor, was always ready to aid the sufferer. Rev. Elias Knutsen attended to the spiritual needs of the many. He preached the Gospel, being an ordained minister of the Baptist faith. He baptized many of his neighbors, comforted the sick, treated the weary, married people of many faiths, buried those who passed on to a better land and gave solace to those people left to mourn a loss. A true pioneer missionary who homesteaded in our midst, worked hard all through the week and preached a powerful sermon on Sunday.

Charlie Tinsley was a lawyer, Dr. Russell a dentist, Rev. George Strycker a minister of the Brethren Church, Myrtle Morrison (Mrs. M. Byington) was a school teacher. In those days all neighbors and dry landers. Trades were well represented, the carpenters perhaps being in the majority. Oscar and John Holden, Isaac and Jonas Dahl, Tom Berlie, Lyle Cason, Ole Olson and many others. Bert Manning a builder, who could build a home with all the plumbing and wiring for electricity, even to making the cement blocks. George Hendrickson and Martin Ackmark were

Robsart mail arrives by "Pony Express" from Maple Creek, March, 1919

bricklayers and built all our chimneys. John Bakker the plasterer. Frank Robertson and Al Coplin our painters. W. A. Olmsted, our first undertaker, was also one of our first settlers.

Ed. Murphy, a fiddler, who provided entertainment. Jack Bell, a fine cornet player, who was a band leader. Our community had everything, even to correct time, because C. E. Dijstra, a jeweler, who was breaking up his homestead with oxen, fixed our clocks and watches—and I mean fixed.

Kirby and Seale were barbers by trade and Bert Williams was a baker. Charlie Hield had a seat on the Stock Exchange but thought farming more profitable so came seeking land. Andrew Skaug, a blacksmith, thought beating at ploughshares and farming would go good together so built a shop on his homestead. He put shoes on all horses and ploughshares made no bad money that he became a hardware dealer and insurance agent. D. J. Wylie was our first M.L.A. and represented us in the Legislative Assembly. P. H. Abbott was working in the Cypress Gardens ranch on the Whitemud River and had not yet reached the tycoon stage. Dr. J. J. Richardson was a veterinarian and treated our sick animals.

Surely this was a cosmopolitan community, drawn from almost every state in the Union and every province of Canada, as well as many other lands.

The first settler to pass away beyond the cabin was Bill Fleming, a former policeman, who immigrated here from Valley City, North Dakota. A veteran of the Spanish American war, who served in the Philippines. He was buried at Maple Creek.

This was the foundation period, when settlers were concerned with clearing the stones from the land and breaking up enough prairie to comply with homestead regulations than actual farming.

A new excitement was appearing on the horizon. Surveys were taking place to fix the grade and the townsite. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company purchased a quarter section of land from Chris Peterson and gave it the name Robsart. This no doubt was selected from the heroine of Scott's "Kenilworth," Amie Robsart.

Work on the grade followed quickly, and great was the excitement when the smoke from the work train appeared and the rails were laid right into the settlement. A large number of settlers walked eastward to Dry Coulee to take a look at the track and the work train. This meant a visit to the long haul from Maple Creek.

Lots in Robsart were being offered for sale and buildings were being erected and others moved from farms on to the townsite.

Henry Abbott meanwhile had purchased a parcel of land on the south side of the track and was selling lots for building purposes. Abbott himself was building several pieces of business on this land in an effort to get a head start on the C.P.R. site across the track. He opened a grocery store and feed mill.

J. J. France, who had built the grade into Robsart, opened the first lumber yard and restaurant, hauling the material over from Maple Creek.

Andy Holme moved his blacksmith shop on Abbott's townsite and Meina and Heninger built a hardware store. By 1914, Abbott's townsite was quite a little village, even having a branch bank of the Union Bank of Canada located in Abbott's store.

Now a change was taking place once again, and Alfred Rubin was erecting a general store building on the C.P.R. townsite. Many other buildings were being erected. A large hotel was under construction.

L. P. Rogstad and Andrew Bolstad moved in some buildings and opened up a post office and butcher shop.

The business men who first located on the Abbott townsite started to move across the track to the C.P.R. townsite. Abbott's store was also moved across until all business premises were on the C.P.R. townsite. Finally a station house for the Railway Company was completed and Alex Sarka was the first agent serving us for many years.

As soon as the railroad hauled freight the first elevator was built and this was the North Star elevator.

Lumber yards appeared as though by magic. A theatre was built, which is now the community hall, and Rolsart came into being, finally incorporated into a village.

The surrounding countryside has had its ups and downs, plagued with grasshoppers, cutworms, wireworms, hot dry winds, hailstorms, depressions, mortgage companies, frost, windstorms and taxes.

We, the hardy pioneers, have survived them all and made good. A tribute to these hardy settlers who dauntless, faced all these hazards. They had grit and true Christian determination to wrest a home from out of the wilderness.

Grading railroad east of Rolsart, 1913

The Song of the Years

By Mary O. A. Tee-Hanson

THE [illegible]

[illegible] retired.

[illegible]

he got away on his own.

[illegible]

Robert France Drives the Train

The France family left a cellar full of honey which they could not sell and a young orchard. Word came up from Montana years later that Mr. France's place was worth much money had sold to him. You met on the trail in a covered wagon with long horses. Mr. and Mrs. France, their four boys and August, headed westward up the high bluffs on to the Canadian border entering south of Cardston, Alberta. Up past the [illegible] hills he pounded into his new home. At one place [illegible] making a through the wagon. August [illegible] Every bag had [illegible] hundred and [illegible] pounds. Even the wheels had [illegible] removed from the wagon before the wagon itself. [illegible] from the [illegible] had to be built at right [illegible] and hence could get [illegible] Mrs. France and August [illegible] Mrs. France [illegible] at berry picking. Some [illegible] to have [illegible] to go home. August was a [illegible] making a drive for [illegible] before they got [illegible] Mrs. France just [illegible] at them and went on with her picking.

They spent the winter in Bassano, Alberta. August and the other boys slept in a tent all winter. Some mornings Mr. France had to pry the blanket off them with a crowbar. They had frozen off from their breath. Harry [illegible] "It's hard to get up in the morning but it's harder to [illegible] bed" [illegible] apply here.

Mr. France had a look around Calgary but decided the land was too swampy. I understand the land around Calgary today is valued high both price and production. So around and around the wheel of fortune goes and where she stops nobody knows.

Rolling covered wagon roll along and it did over the many miles between Bassano, Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan. Robert was not on the map then. And on it was Mr. and Mrs. France, their family and August were ushered into their new home.

Mrs. France opened a restaurant in Robert. Long Hunted, now Mrs. [illegible] Erickson, and Hilda, her sister, now Mrs. [illegible] were her helpers.

Before the railways made its debut through the Robert territory, Mr. France started a livery barn in Robert. August worked for him and he freighted lumber and supplies from Maple Creek, which was usually a three day trip. Sometimes in the coldest months it was very hot and in the winter it would be very cold and stormy. The men would have robe blankets and at night wrap themselves in blankets beside their horses, waking in the morning go with a fire, warm themselves and a hot breakfast. It takes much to get their winter supplies in the fall. Wagons had to be [illegible] through [illegible] going over the Whitewood hill [illegible] August. But the road [illegible] wagon. This team [illegible] August thinking they had gone [illegible] horse barebacks and rode back about fifteen miles to France. Evening's a ride all to [illegible] Home. Here the livery barn [illegible] filled most of the time to [illegible] capacity. A horse on the streets of Robert today is almost a novelty.

Mr. France as a railroad contractor helped build the railroad through Robert. August worked for him. Today there is the road machinery with its huge shovels to pick up tons of earth, gigantic cranes to move the timber and rails in place. In those days it was mostly man and beast working with frames

[illegible]

art in itself

[illegible]

will be useful and necessary

[illegible]

wind blew the roof off the livery barn.

[illegible]

befriended an immigrant boy

[illegible]

to make it his life work

[illegible]

[illegible]

and finally eradicate cancer

[illegible]

applied it to the offending molar

[illegible]

to all.

[illegible]

were settlers here.

[illegible]

were the teachers.

[illegible]

Oldest Pioneers Prefer Ox Team

[illegible]

worse for its trip to town

[illegible]

their roof.

[illegible]

Golden Wedding Anniversary

[illegible]

and looks after mother and dad

[illegible]

born snipe hunting.

open grazing land.

ear with grain in a few hours.

behind harrows, stooking, etc.

[illegible]

[illegible] find [illegible] again.

[illegible]

[illegible] seed and tractor fuel

[illegible]

his red flannel underwear

as scarce as hen's teeth.

we who stayed, I cannot say

Scandinavian predominates in our district and the settlers of all races have the reputation of being hospitable and friendly. Someone said they were the salt of the earth

Pushing the frontiers further back with relentless hands,
Blazing a trail with a plow, far in the hinterlands,
Holding fast to their birthright, born to the realm of toil,
Bearded, grim and unconquered, ragged kings of soil..

Building their lonely cabins, staking their homestead claims,
Breaking a trail to somewhere, steady fearless and fame,
Bounded by sky and muskeg hedged by the vast unknown,
Earning their hundred and sixty winning their fight alone.

Th irs is the dream eternal hills that are rugged and green,
Lure of the far horizons, prairie wind, swift and clean,
Visioning towns in the making faith in the untried lands,
Holding the country's future safe in their calloused hands.
—Anonymous

These are our pioneers! O, Canada, they have stood on guard for thee!

Farming is still a gamble but it is not haphazard or quite the trust in luck as it used to be.

There are still the droughts, the frosts, the hail the insects, the winds. There are better farming practices, better and larger power machinery There are those who will contend that when farmers farmed on a smaller scale they farmed better There are the P F A.A bonus, hail insurance sprays for weeds and insects, treatments for smut and preventative for wireworm damage. Rust and sawfly resistant varieties in grains. Vaccinations and new drugs for stock diseases.

Social security as pension for our aged, mother allowance, baby bonus, hospital insurance plan.

Second World War Honor Roll

NAMES OF THE SERVICE MEN FROM HONOR ROLL IN ROBSART COMMUNITY HALL, WHO SERVED IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

*Ole Olson, jr
John E. Olmsted
Harry Brown
Alfred Brown
Raymond Brown
Clifford Brown
Gordon Tiegen
Allan Syverson
Sam Amundson
Jack Caton
Bernard Warberg
Julian Stengrim
Everett Eamer
Harold Hanson
Bill Olmsted
Keith Bellamy
Chet Olmsted
Ole Olson, sr
Stanley Shaw
Max Husband
Steve Bell
Alfred Thompson
Wesley Delaney
Marvin Thompson
Arthur Rye
Lloyd Morrison
Henry Smith
Andrew Elder
Morris Madson
Ed. Pargee
Joseph Popick
Joseph Hatell
John Scuban
Dick Bellamy

* Killed

Picnickers, 1916

Mr and Mrs. Bert Olmsted, Mr and Mrs. Gene Olmsted, Mr and Mrs Curtis Haugen

Pioneer Days

(By J E. Olmsted)

I was born in New York State went to North Dakota when I was twenty-one looking for adventure in the wild and woolly west Got work on a farm there, then in 1909 I read some of the literature the Canadian government sent out telling of the wonderful opportunities for young men to homestead land in Saskatchewan Thinking it would be a cheap way of owning my own land I decided to come to Canada and file on land. As I had gotten married by now my roaming days were over and I had to settle down and make a home.

My father-in-law Benjamin Howden, had homesteaded in North Dakota, and he told me I would really have to pay for my land, but being young, I didn't take him too seriously However I have found out since that he was right The hard work, self-denial and hardships the pioneers endure make the land very expensive.

My brother Bert and a friend, Mortimer Bylington, the son of a New York doctor and I (I am called Gene) came to Sask. atchewan the Fall of 1909 to file on land Saw a lot of the country before we arrived at Maple Creek to look over the South Country There was only one livery rig available when we reached Maple Creek and they could take only one man. As there were a number of others going out to look the land over we tossed coins to see which one should go and Chris Holmes drew

the next three weeks

to jump down

[illegible]

[illegible] black, dreary-looking country

[illegible]

We heard there were fish in [illegible] told our wives to meet us at noon w[illegible] from Hagle [illegible] with the [illegible] [illegible] to make the trip [illegible]

[illegible]

bothered us.

[illegible] earned a grubstake for the winter.

[illegible]

operating a store there.

[illegible]

[illegible]

for many years.

[illegible]

tion in handling the job.

[illegible]

this foolish rhyme:

An eastern boy of twenty one,
[illegible]
He left his happy home so far away
In an eastern town one rainy day
He took a train bound for the west,
To be a man I'll do my best
[illegible]
His brother met him at the station
And says "Hello there, old relation,
And introduced him to all the men
On ranches where he had ever been
One man had a voice so loud,
It sounded like a thunder cloud,
[illegible]
[illegible]
Come with me, I'll tell you why"

He took me to a hole in the ground,
(They called it a hotel) and there we found
Biscuits so hard we couldn't bite,
I knelt down and prayed for dynamite
Next thing I knew I was on the ranch,
Astride a horse that had come from France.
It kicked and bucked. I didn't care
It soon found out that I was there.
Then all at once he let right out.
I threw my hat and gave a shout,
Says I, "Hobo, it's time to chew",
That's one thing I could always do.

Gene the Kid

Some History of the Rohsart District North

As written by Mrs. Joseph Smiley

WE came into the country in November 1913. Shipped our goods and chattels from Crosby North Dakota to Maple Creek Saskatchewan. When we reached there my two little girls and I stayed for a week in Maple Creek with a family we had known in North Dakota. These folks had chipped up several years before.

My husband and another man who had come with us unloaded the cars and as there was no place they could get to store our goods they piled them beside the stock yards. Then they began to haul some of our possessions together with the stock out to the claim. While they were gone with lumber for our buildings a lot of our goods were stolen. However when they got the lumber and what things that weren't stolen taken out the children and I went out on the last load. We stopped for dinner at the Fleming ranch then run by Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Morrison. The road wasn't far had out as far as the Fordice place and then we turned east and had to go out about ten or twelve miles east and south to our claim. It was Section 25-6 25 West 3rd. This part of the road was just prairie trail which was hardly discernible sometimes. By the time it was dark we hardly knew whether we were on the trail or not. However we went on. We forded Belanger Creek and Davis Creek and after what seemed to me a long long time finally arrived at our journey's end.

My husband had gotten the loan of an empty ranch house for us to live in while we built our shack. Our claim was one mile south of the Charlie Moir ranch on Bull Coulee. Our house had two rooms Twelve by fourteen one on the ground floor and the other a sleeping room upstairs. There were not many neighbors around. There were the Moir Brothers who came from Alberta in 1902 and who lost over 900 cattle the terrible winter of 1906-7. Their ranch was about four miles west and north of us. Dave Greenwood and Henry Clear were about the only homesteaders but quite a number came about the same time as we did and more the next summer. The A X ranch and the Gannan ranch were abandoned when we came. A ranch that was formerly the Bolton ranch was then owned by Tom Drury from the Cypress Hills. It was about two miles from us on the Farwell Creek and the Harris boys were then running it.

[illegible]

afterwards restored

[illegible]

of Ravenscrag

[illegible]

carried by Mr. Rogers

mission to hold a school in a vacant house as we hadn't sold our debentures and were not in a position to build a school house. We just had a summer school, from spring until late fall as some of the children had too far to go to attend school during the winter. Our first teacher was Miss Unhauser. That fall after the children had gone home from school the building caught fire. The next year we rented Dave Greenwood's house and had school in it, but a few days later it also burned down. Someone seemed determined we should not have a school. But we kept right on. The trustees told the teacher to stay, and all the men turned out and put up a school house in a hurry, and although it wasn't finished by any means we again had our school going again. For the time being the men had made seats and desks for the children. That summer we had twenty in the school. Miss Amen was the first teacher in our new school house and before the next summer we had it finished and painted white with a red roof. We called it Clear Valley. We never had a church in our district. There were not enough people of one denomination to build a church, but the United Church minister came out from Robsart every two weeks and held services in the school house. We were lucky every year to get a teacher who could play the organ, so we had a choir.

Joe Smiley was the blacksmith and general handyman of the district. He used to sharpen the plow shares and make and fix all sorts of things. We like our neighbors had quite a struggle to make ends meet as he and was so rocky we never could get a good crop. There were three years in succession that we got nothing. The first two years the grain froze when it was just in the milk, and the next year it dried out, or rather burned up with the hot wind, so we had to sell most of our stock in order to keep eating. By that time our neighbours were all moving out, so there weren't enough children to keep the school going. As we wanted our children to have an education we moved into Robsart for a time.

Of all the people who lived in the Clear Valley district there are none left. Of the twenty four families who lived there twenty three adults and nine children are dead, and the rest have moved away.

Gravel train in Robsart 1914

Memoirs of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Johnson

ERIC Johnson came to Canada in 1913 from Lake North Dakota and made several trips to Maple Creek before the railroad came through [illegible] the Belmont district in 1914.

He started with his brother Fred, who had taken a homestead about a mile and a half from Belmont for a while but later took a homestead for himself five miles west of Belmont, which land he still owns and farms.

[illegible] came to Canada with my parents. We arrived in Belmont on April 8th. It was a cold rainy night and [illegible] for the night in the hotel [illegible] and gave us [illegible] where we have stayed. They were just putting in the [illegible] and they were not finished but we were so glad of a place to sleep after the long trip from Indiana which had taken four days and three nights.

The next day was wet and cold and we moved for the [illegible] night [illegible] west of Belmont. It snowed a little [illegible] country just like a [illegible] But here we got [illegible] appear [illegible] spring [illegible] to get [illegible] May we [illegible] and my brother and I helped [illegible] I remember [illegible] Well, I guess we are getting pretty close to the North Pole [illegible] and to be a [illegible]

That fall my brother Ben got [illegible] He [illegible] thought it [illegible] threshing machine [illegible] Belmont. They [illegible] Belmont [illegible] Ben [illegible] and [illegible] My [illegible] and [illegible] the day [illegible] that [illegible] We [illegible] and [illegible] found [illegible] and [illegible] I [illegible] with. The [illegible] We [illegible] started [illegible] and a [illegible] would [illegible] differ [illegible] We [illegible] for a [illegible] We [illegible] hear [illegible] and [illegible] right [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and

The years 1919-20 and 21 were very dry years and Erick would go to the lignite mines in Montana for coal. It was much cheaper than the coal we could get in Bakersfield. [illegible] he made the [illegible] he had a large tank and drove a four horse team. [illegible] way home they had to make some [illegible] stop [illegible] the wheels on the wagon so the [illegible] would not hit back the horse heels. This time [illegible] the horses [illegible] were all [illegible] Erick had [illegible] and [illegible] the horses. With the help of one of his brothers and some neighbors who were with him they finally got them straightened out. It was always a relief when they reached home after one of these trips.

Erick used to play ball a lot and I remember on the 4th of July 1923 we had a very hot day [illegible] the windows on the west side of the house and the next afternoon Mr. Savage came to get Erick to go [illegible] to play ball. Erick said [illegible] and [illegible] with most of the windows out of his house. Then Mr. Savage said "You can't get new window panes until tomorrow so you might as well play ball today." So we hung blankets over the open windows and he went to Chenax.

I went the first church service we attended in Bakersfield. It was [illegible] 1919. We had been at our good neighbor's house (Mr. Stevenson). We had Sunday dinner there and in the afternoon [illegible] Rhodes for church. It was held over Albert's store. Rev. Rakestraw was the minister. He spoke in Tennessee. Some of us could not understand the language but it was good to be together with [illegible] Christian [illegible] we felt blessed. [illegible] Church Ladies Aid brought a building from Mount Moriah and Mr. Dougher, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Morrison and Erick moved it to Bakersfield. The ladies got busy and with the help of the men folk we soon had a new little church.

We had some trying experiences in those early days but we had our pleasures too. Dances in the summer. But in the winter we all would get together in the different homes and would play games, have recitals and sing songs. We as joined in through some of us did not have very good voices. However we all enjoyed it nevertheless. There were times we children wished a lot more than we have who we do not have these parties any more. Of course we would not like to do without radio either but there was something about those parties that kept us close together and that made for better friendship and better living.

Another incident Erick recalls took place in the fall of 1927. He and his brother Henry were working on Mr. Elsworth's threshing outfit and threshing on Mr. John Mel [illegible] farm. When it came bedtime they could find no place to sleep except a haystack with some blankets on it that had been put up for hay. Next morning the [illegible] further and finally found a place to [illegible]. They crawled into the stacking well and warm, but were pretty cramped in the morning after being forced to lie in one position all night.

Olsons among the first settlers

(Written by Mrs. Peter Svenson)

CHRIS and Hilda Olson, my father and mother, were among the first and oldest settlers who moved to this hold, hold and prairie and pioneered in what is now the Belmont community. Father came to the South East of Benson in the West Bend, in September, [illegible] where he and Mother resided.

In April, [illegible] Father and his brother came to Maple Creek from Minnesota to [illegible] a [illegible] farm. Mother and Dad [illegible] at least one of a [illegible] and had built a church on the homestead. Dad was one [illegible] of their pioneering days in South [illegible] that I should give a bit of [illegible] up to that time.

Father was born in Nakskov, Denmark, August 9th, 1864. He was the oldest of a family of five girls and three boys and came with his parents at the age of three years to Avoca, Iowa, where he [illegible] pioneered. The [illegible] school in Iowa and also [illegible] high school in Dallas, Iowa.

Mother, [illegible] Miss Hilda Mathiesen, was born in [illegible] Denmark, [illegible] 1870. She was one of the [illegible] children of [illegible] family. At the age of [illegible] years Mother [illegible] the [illegible] years [illegible] a day of [illegible] years. She took up the trade of Tailor making and was employed for [illegible] years [illegible] and [illegible] Copenhagen, Denmark.

[illegible] Mother [illegible] Minneapolis, Minnesota, [illegible] Mr. [illegible] who she [illegible] married [illegible] 1892. However, she was [illegible] by the [illegible] death of her [illegible] husband. It was there that she met [illegible] who was married on September 9th, 1895. To this union were born four sons and one daughter. Two boys died in infancy. Arthur passed away at the age of four years from diphtheria leaving Harry, Peter, Hilda and Emma, the only daughter.

The [illegible] years Father resided on farming for [illegible] years was employed in the Chicago, Rock Island Pacific Railroad for four years then spent five years as caretaker for a lumber firm and finally a year as salesman for the Standard Oil Company.

In June, [illegible] Father, mother and I set out in a covered wagon from Avoca, Iowa, to Cannon Falls, Minnesota, then on to Red Wing, Minnesota, where Father filed on a homestead where we pioneered and lived for [illegible] years.

In [illegible] after [illegible] of Minnesota, Dad and mother decided to [illegible] Chris Peterson and John Stenfjeld, [illegible] John and John Stenfjeld, [illegible] September of that year they set out from their [illegible] and travelled the [illegible] Dakota for [illegible] and finally [illegible] Mr. [illegible] Wood of which [illegible] Dad [illegible] Wednesday and then Wednesday morning [illegible] Chris Peterson and John Stenfjeld proceeded that Father and friends should proceed on to Maple

[illegible]

[illegible] change on the South half of Section 21

[illegible]

[illegible] not always so.

[illegible]

ground became too dry to break. By that time Ellen was getting anxious to have a well dug. Her husband wasn't able to do the work [illegible] fifty feet. [illegible] The water never [illegible] regardless of how much was drawn out.

As mother and Harry were expected soon, [illegible] had to get a [illegible] board [illegible] tar paper [illegible] They [illegible]

Mother and Harry arrived in Maple Creek [illegible] a distance of [illegible] fifty [illegible] till the [illegible] came home.

It was no easy matter to prepare meals after the [illegible] had [illegible] away [illegible] were [illegible] twenty two miles away.

The first [illegible] in November of the same year [illegible] a baby [illegible] arrived in Maple Creek where Peter, my husband, met [illegible] He had arrived [illegible] with a [illegible] of [illegible] Maple Creek [illegible] I relegated the hat to the wagon box, never to be worn again.

We stayed overnight at the home of Mrs. [illegible] where so many homesteaders stopped for meals and lodging. I was very glad to stay with such a kind lady, especially with a baby. She made it very comfortable for us. The next day we arrived at our

[illegible] Harley Ford and Harry were living on a big project there, but it was home. I was so glad to see them. I wonder how have been happier had I jumped into a palace. Harley had [illegible] Harry [illegible] The next day he was back a night to visit [illegible] the church with the pages for the regular [illegible] We played with my parents that evening and having [illegible] Peter and Ford had by [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] by [illegible] flowering. There were [illegible] windows [illegible] white [illegible] It was [illegible] the church was [illegible] and one day a [illegible] for the [illegible] Peter had left a hay fork standing up against the wall.

Our nearest post office was Kotzebue. Sometimes mails went out on a [illegible] It was felt that a post office a shorter distance away should be a priority. The people in Mr. R. Priority who was operating a general store in Nome [illegible] the fighting [illegible] and [illegible] Peter [illegible] that a post office be created in [illegible] Priority [illegible] postmaster. The store and post office [illegible] Nome [illegible] distance from [illegible] where [illegible] Nome [illegible] Priority [illegible] The first house in this district was built in this [illegible] Mr. and Mrs. Priority. [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] Church was planted at end of the town. There were good crowds [illegible] The homesteads danced merrily on till daylight.

The first School District in this area was named Lure and [illegible] in the Winter and Spring of 1911. The school house was located on the South east Quarter of Section [illegible] on the Four Dimensions [illegible] by [illegible] Lure. The school house had [illegible] The teaching [illegible] Mr. [illegible] completed the West half of Section [illegible] where George Wright now lives. Father was one of the first school trustees. Miss Myrtle Stockton [illegible] Mrs. M. Springer [illegible] the first school teacher.

Peter bought this school house in 1917 moved it across home [illegible] and with alterations it formed a part of our home.

The summer of [illegible] was very dry, but in the first week of September the district was drenched by a big rain of over five inches which brought new life to the homesteaders for the next period [illegible] experience. [illegible] Board. [illegible] the crops [illegible] harvested.

There came [illegible] homesteaders [illegible] and [illegible] with their wagons [illegible] Nome [illegible] where they had [illegible] Peter [illegible] and [illegible] of deep [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] for many [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] They expected to be home [illegible] but the last twenty eight miles on ice from Hoffmans [illegible] of Kaskanak were especially tough. There was no trail to follow so they cut right across country. No one was using on the way

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] and perish.

[illegible]

[illegible] beacon light to guide them home.

[illegible]

where mother was waiting for us. The blizzard continued on ahead all night. Father got up several times to push the snow away so it wouldn't block the door which swung outwards.

Joyous was the day in April when the construction crew moved in with scrapers and other equipment to build the railway grade. They located a short distance from our shack. Joe France was the contractor and his wife was the cook for the crew. It was there we first met August Ostrave along with others. They built the grade at a fast pace. When the crops started to dry up a number of homesteaders went to work on the railroad grade in order to earn a few dollars but when the much welcomed rain came in June they went home to break up more land.

Yes, there were hardships in those early years. I know Father on many occasions during the winter of 1911-12 took on jobs hauling from Maple Creek. Sometimes it was a load of lumber for a homesteader's shack or a load of merchandise for the store. He often walked behind the load to keep warm. Sometimes his lunch would be frozen as he stopped alongside the road to feed his horses.

1914 was a very dry year but our hearts were lightened when in June or the first part of July the first train and crew pulled into where Robsart is now. We watched it pull in. We couldn't wait to see the train till it passed our place & walked to Robsart. We were jubilant as we knew there would soon be a train service. We watched the crew (most of them were Indians) as they worked fast and confident in the burning hot sun laying the ties, steel and spiking the rails. Mother remarked that they too helped to build the country the hard way.

In the Spring and Summer of 1914 the people residing in Robsart came to my parents for their supply of milk, but soon the demand became greater than the supply.

Charlie Chew, proprietor of the Queens Cafe, walked down to our place in hopes we could bring him two quarts of milk that night. Peter didn't think well of the proposition and besides we had only horses and wagon with which to deliver it. I suggested that we walk and we arrived to ten quarts of milk to the cafe. From then on from August 1914 to the summer of 1918 we delivered milk every day, rain or shine, stormy and sometimes below zero. We were not always on schedule, especially when that terrible blizzard in 1917 swept this area, the worst blizzard since we moved here in 1910.

1915 and 1916 were bumper crop years. Some of the crops in 1916 were severely damaged by the heavy frost in early August. This was the year when much summerfallowing was done. There was plenty of moisture in the ground and the farmers who had a few dollars to hire the work done. With three horses, Peter broke many acres of land on the homestead, plodding behind a walking plow, doing twenty miles a day in the field.

1917 was a dry year. Crops were poor but wheat on the early 1916 breaking produced fourteen bushels per acre.

In 1918, Harry, the only son, was drafted for service and left for Regina in June and went overseas in August. This left Father and Mother alone with the farm work. There were no exemptions for ages twenty-one to twenty-three inclusive. He

[illegible]

together for a number of years.

[illegible]

farmers,

[illegible]

would walk to the Pool meetings.

[illegible]

in the ditch.

[illegible]

The hungry and dirty thirties were well named. In [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] hand cannot visualize how terrible it is.

[illegible]

Father and Mother were greatly honoured at the Robsart [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] the Robsart cemetery

[illegible] year 1952. [illegible] laid to rest in Robsart cemetery

As we loved them, so we miss them,
In our memory they were ever near;
Always loved and remembered,
For to us they were so dear

In looking back [illegible] all together. [illegible] happy days after all

A Pioneer Song

Mrs. J. A. Smiley

I've reached the land of snow and ice.
Where furs and felt boots are so nice,
Where coyotes howl and wolves do, too,
And deer and antelope come to view

Chorus:
Oh prairie land, sweet prairie land,
As knee deep in the snow I stand,
I look away across the plain,
And wonder why I ever came,
I want to leave but cannot go,
Because of blizzards, ice and snow
The lovely vales and deep ravines,
Of snow and hunger now are scenes,
The rabbits chew the poplar trees,
And have to move around or freeze

The prairie chickens flit and fly,
And find no place beneath the sky,
Where they can warm their poor cold feet,
While hunting for a bite to eat

The badgers now are sleeping sound.
In holes they burrowed in the ground
The ducks have gone so far away,
They won't be back until next May

The white man builds his little home,
Where once the Indians used to roam,
He builds of sod or log or board,
For this is all he can afford

The bachelors still are waiting here,
For Jane or Anne or Olga dear,
But they are not so very bold,
And won't come out here in the cold

The summers are quite short they say,
They sleigh and snowball here in May,
And if you come along in June.
They say it might snow very soon.

If the summers are too cold for you,
Put on a good warm coat or two,
And if the skeeters you do bite.
They surely think they have the right

The skeeters and the sand flies, too,
They eat your horse and bite at you,
The flying ants come by the peck.
They bite you then crawl down your neck

There're stones to dig and sod to break,
It's hard whatever way you take,
Your hands are full of blisters now,
From running that old stubborn plow

The rabbits will contribute too,
Unto our ever daily stew,
The prairie chicken has his share,
In the prairie farmer's bill of fare
But there are fishes in the lake,
And also berries for to take
We all can get a little wood,
And prairie chips to cook our food.
We try to raise a little wheat,
To get some decent things to eat,
But gophers come along to stay,
They eat the wheat instead of hay
We try and try, but what's the use,
We cannot make enough for snooze
We hardly ever get the rain,
On this old dried-out prairie plain
The old grey mare is tired out
She has to haul us all about,
To dances and the rodeo,
For that is all the people know
Well, this is all, I think, my friend,
So now I'll have to make an end
Of telling of we pioneers,
With all our hopes and work and fears.

Last Chorus-

Oh, prairie land, sweet prairie land,
As on some little mound I stand.
I look away across the plains,
And wonder why it never rains,
And notice what the people stand
Who came here to this prairie land.

Robsart's Peculiar Feature

(Archie L. Smiley)

THE rest have told about their pioneer experiences, but I would like to tell a little about a peculiar feature of the Robsart vicinity.

I have travelled from coast to coast in Canada and, of all the queer sites I've seen, I believe that this little coulee is equally an oddity

This coulee, which apparently runs uphill, starts at the Frenchman River which is quite a deep valley, becomes narrower and narrower until at last it flows into a little lake called Lonesome Lake. This coulee is about twenty miles long, and at the head of this coulee, which should be the mouth, is situated quite large hay fields, and a large dam which is located on the Nelson ranch. At the mouth the coulee narrows down to just a small ravine and drains into Lonesome Lake, which has no outlet only to flow into a tributary of Battle Creek, which runs into Milk River and so on into the Missouri and the Mississippi

I might say this is called Dry Coulee because it dries up in the summer excepting some deep holes along its course.

History of Robsart Homemakers' Club

On the nineteenth day of August,
  Way back in twenty one
The Homemakers of Robsart,
  Their Club had just begun.

Eighteen kind ladies came at first
  And put their names down here,
And then we had three more who joined
  Before the end of the year

The object of this noble Club
  Is to help where'er we can,
To help the poor and needy,
  In this and every land.

There are Mrs. Sveund and Mrs. Olmsted,
  Out of all that motley throng,
Who are left to us of eighteen,
  So we put them in our song

They have always been so faithful,
  To help in every way,
We hope they never leave us,
  Nor go away to stay

Our first big venture was to try
  To remedy our ills;
To get a doctor who would come
  To give medicine and pills.

The hospital was needing aid,
  So we thought that we could help,
By giving of our hard-earned dough,
  Without one groan or yelp.

In May of 1925,
  We prepared a little place,
And planted all the trees we could
  Our school grounds for to grace.

The Cemetery's silent voice
  Called to this band of braves,
So we painted white some little boards,
  To mark these unnamed graves.

We started marking graves each year,
  We fenced this place around,
And then for planting of the trees,
  We had to break the ground.

The Cemetery's "Fund for Aid,"
  Came on in twenty-eight;
We also got things for the Hall,
  Some cups and spoons and plate.

Some chairs and dishes too we gave,
  Unto the Robsart Hall
So, when we had a banquet
  We'd have dishes for them all.

Some time in the early thirties,
  Some girls to camp did go;
In '37 in Robsart town,
  A short course was held also.

We used to have in our Club
  Some actors who were swell,
For many years we put on plays,
  And thus did very well.

Now, when we heard the War was on—
  That "Great and Mighty War,"
We thought about the needy,
  And we made them quilts galore

We also gave them blankets,
  And clothing, soap and food,
We made for them three hundred quilts
  We though they would be good

To keep them warm in winter,
  When they hadn't any home,
We couldn't bear to think them cold,
  When we sat warm at home

It wasn't just the Homemakers,
  To whom these quilts were due,
The others came and helped to quilt
  And brought their pieces too.

We also filled some Ditty Bags,
  For the boys who went to sea,
Some of them wrote to thank us,
  For these gifts that were so free

Now every year we hold a bazaar
  Of articles so grand,
When in comes Bill, our auctioneer
  And sells to "beat the band."

We also built a Rest Room,
  With other's help and aid,
Our friend L. Brunas put it up,
  And a very good job he made

Whenever help was needed,
  We lent our willing ears
To poverty, illness, fire and flood
  Clear down through the years.

These verses may sound very drab
  To you, who listen in,
We should have put some fun in this,
  So you could have a grin.

Now, since you've heard our story,
  We would like a little tune.
So we can sing our words of glory.
  And we'd like to have it soon

-MRS. J. SMILEY

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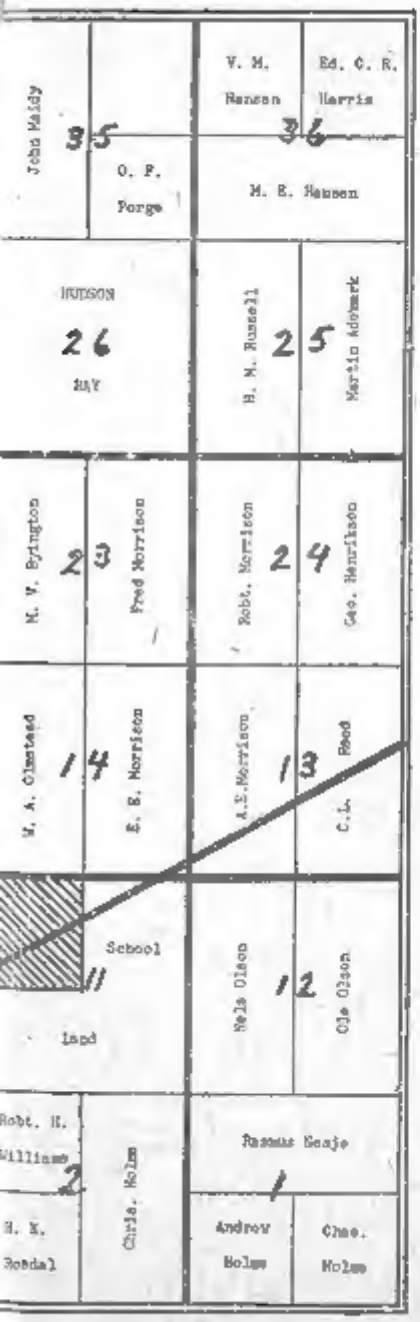

TOWNSHIP 6, RANGE 24 EAST—

A. DeCrane
Mr. Patton
Bartlett Family
J. France
T. Davies
Chas. Morrison
H. Wittig
Iver Brown
Martin Lindgren
J. Kynock
N. C. Nelson
L. Reid
F. Robertson
F. Johnson
E. Anderson
H. Manning
J. Nelubowich
M. Distad
W. Melena
S. Rosdahl
J. Aspland
P. L. Peterson
H. C. Tillier
F. Chamberlain
W. Cornish
D. Durant
J. Bell
P. H. Abbott
J. Erickson

TOWNSHIP 4, RANGE 25 SOUTH—

A. Piggott
J. McCall
T. B. Wells
Ross Edgar
Nels Warberg
R. Amundson
Bugg
J. Stanley
R. Scobey
Mickels